25 YEARS OF TURKEY-UKRAINE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION

Proceedings of the International Conference Jointly Organized by Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Eurasian Studies Master Program of the Middle East Technical University and the Embassy of Ukraine in Turkey on 12 December 2017

AVİM

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AVİM's work and research field covers Europe, the Balkans, the Wider Black Sea Region, the Caucasus, Central and Eastern Asia. AVİM also seeks to contribute to the understanding of challenges and opportunities that Turkey faces within the changing global geopolitical context. The geopolitical position of Turkey requires utmost attention to the developments in the Eurasian evolution with two key regions being the Balkans and the Caucasus. Thereby, AVİM focuses on these two regions in its studies. Within this framework, the problematic Turkish-Armenian relations is a subject to which AVİM attributes special importance.

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25 Years of Turkey-Ukraine Diplomatic Relations: Regional Developments and Prospects for Enhanced Cooperation

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Foreword by H.E. Ambassador Andrii Sybiha

In 2017, we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Turkey. However, we should not forget that our historic ties are not confined to these twenty five years. To give few examples as to the deep-rootedness of our relations, I would like to remind that the first agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Ukrainian Cossacks was signed in mid-XVII century. In 1918, Ottoman Empire was among the first states to recognize the independence of "Ukraine People's Republic." In 1991, the Republic of Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Ukraine after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

These close historical ties consolidated by cultural proximities between our peoples. Sharing the same basin of the Black Sea bring the two countries even closer in the political sphere, as well. Not only in 2012 we introduced visa-free regime, we even launched passport-free regime in June 2017.

Ukraine and Turkey are also two complementary countries in the sphere of economy. We started from the 126 million Dollar trade volume in 1997. This volume exceeded 8 billion Dollars in 2008. In 2017, our trade volume achieved approximately a 25% increase compared to that of 2016, which was around 4 billion Dollars. Now we are actively developing our trade and economic ties, pursuing the ambitious goal of increasing trade turnover to 20 billion US Dollars.

With the signing of the two basic documents, i.e., the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments Agreement, and the Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement, we will further boost these figures. We also expect the signing of the Free Trade Agreement in the nearest future. As soon as we leave the current difficulties behind, since there is a strong political will from both sides to work on that objective together, I am sure that we will reach all of our ambitious goals.

Unfortunately, as a result of the Russian hybrid aggression against Ukraine, 10,000 people, most of whom are civilians, have been killed in the eastern regions of Ukraine. More than 10% of our territory is under temporary occupation. More than 20% of Ukraine's industrial plants are actually located in those occupied territories. Crimea is also under occupation and our citizens in the Crimean Peninsula, both ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, are struggling for their basic rights and freedoms each and every day.

Despite these unfortunate circumstances, for the first time in the recent years, Ukraine has finally come out of the deep economic crisis that it was trapped in for some time. The GDP growth of the Ukraine has been restored. Economic forecasts for the coming years are positive. This year we have completed the ratification of the Association Agreement with the European Union, signed free trade agreement with Canada. In

addition to these economic achievements, we succeeded in building a new army with the combat capacity strong enough to defend our independence. However, we are aware of the fact that a lot of work is still ahead to strengthen and modernize the Ukrainian army to eventually achieve full compatibility with NATO standards. We are working closely with our international allies to restore peace and security in our Black Sea region.

In this respect Turkey has always been a valuable and reliable partner to Ukraine, and it will surely remain so in the future. We highly appreciate Turkey's unchanging position in support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and our efforts for the de-occupation of Crimea. As two partner countries, we have common interests in the regional neighborhood, fulfillment of which requires the restoration of international law, and peace and stability in the region. Together we are 120 million, and we are strong, when we are together.

We closely follow the recent developments with respect to Turkey's relations with other regional countries, including its reinvigorated cooperation with Russia. We understand the sensitivities of our Turkish partners with respect to fighting terrorist activities on its borders and in energy and maritime security. However, we also believe that despite its tactical cooperation with different countries, Turkey's strategic choices will remain unchanged, just as Ukraine's strategic choices will remain unaltered.

In 2017, the Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Turkey has organized a number of international and bilateral conferences, seminars and workshops dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Ukraine and Turkey. What I saw at all these events is that there is a very vivid interest on both sides to study Ukraine-Turkey relations. However, on the other hand, the number of academics and specialists actually focusing on Ukraine-Turkey relations is still relatively small. That is why, there is, indeed, a huge potential for academic cooperation and joint research between scholars from Ukraine and Turkey.

The panel titled "25 Years of Turkey-Ukraine Diplomatic Relations: Regional Developments and Prospects for Enhanced Cooperation" organized by the Embassy of Ukraine in Turkey, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Middle East Technical University Eurasian Studies Master Program on 12 December 2017 in Ankara has been a significant example of the actualization of the potential for fruitful cooperation between Ukrainian and Turkish research communities. I find it quite important that the papers presented at this panel are brought together in this book to reach out Ukrainian and Turkish academics and specialists, and the interested readers. I believe this conference and the resultant book will encourage academics and specialists in Ukraine and Turkey to develop intellectual ties between the two shores of the Black Sea.

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H.E. Ambassador Andrii SYBIHA
Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Turkey

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Foreword by Professor Pınar Köksal

On 12 December 2017, a panel titled "25 Years of Turkey-Ukraine Diplomatic Relations: Regional Developments and Prospects for Enhanced Cooperation" was organized as a result of the cooperation among AVİM (Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi, Center for Eurasian Studies), the Eurasian Studies Master Program of the Middle East Technical University (METU), and the Embassy of Ukraine in Turkey. The activity took place at the Culture and Convention Center of the Middle East Technical University. The organizing committee of the panel included Prof. Ayşegül Aydıngün (METU), Prof. Pınar Köksal (METU), Assist. Prof. Yuliya Biletska (Karabük University), Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel (AVİM), Hazar Ege Gürsoy (METU) and Alter Kahraman (METU).

The panel, which started after the opening remarks and the keynote speeches, composed of three participants who focused on different aspects of Turkish-Ukrainian relations over the past 25 years under the moderation of the AVİM Senior Analyst Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel. The first speaker was Assist. Prof. Anar Somoncuoğlu from the Hacettepe University Department of International Relations. In her presentation, Somuncuoğlu discussed the new transit corridors and why Turkey and Ukraine participate in and cooperate with each other in interregional connectivity projects, especially in the Black Sea and the Caspian regions. In this perspective, how Turkey and Ukraine perceive their interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia and act on them, as well as how they interact and cooperate with other significant actors were also presented.

The second speaker of the panel was Assoc. Prof. Sergii Glebov from the Odessa Mechnikov National University Faculty of International Relations. Glebov's presentation focused on the issue of the new status quo in the Black Sea region after 2013. According to Glebov, since the "Ukraine crisis," Russia's relations with the United States, the European Union and the NATO have been strained, resulting in the deepest confrontation between the West and the East since the end of the Cold War. Because of this development, today, the idea of a common European security and cooperation framework has significantly weakened. Therefore, according to Glebov, there emerged an urgent of need counterbalancing in the Black Sea region in terms of security issues.

The third and final speaker of the panel was Fethi Kurtiy Şahin, a Research Assistant at METU Graduate School of Social Science, and a PhD candidate at METU Area Studies PhD Program. In his presentation, focusing on the Crimean Tatar diaspora as a "bridge" between Ukraine and Turkey, Şahin analyzed the changes in the relations between this diaspora and Ukraine. He also elaborated on how this change affected the general character of the Crimean Tatar national movement, with its reflections on the relations between Ukraine and Turkey. According to Şahin, relations between Turkey and Ukraine have a strong possibility of advancing, and further collaboration between the two sides are highly probable.

This panel, organized as a result of the collaboration among AVİM, METU Eurasian Studies Master Program, and the Embassy of Ukraine in Turkey brought together policy makers, researchers and academicians in a fruitful attempt to understand both the bilateral and multi-dimensional relations between Turkey and Ukraine on the one hand, and different aspects of these relations that will continue to affect regional dynamics in the years to come on the other.

This book brings together the presentations made during this panel. In addition, it also includes a chapter authored by Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel and Prof. Ayşegül Aydıngün that focuses on the evolution of Turkish-Ukrainian relations throughout history in order to provide a compact historical background of the contemporary Turkish-Ukrainian relations.

Prof. Pınar KÖKSAL

METU Eurasian Studies Master Program Chair

METU Department of Political Science and Public Administration Faculty Member

Foreword by Ambassador (R) Alev Kılıç

Center for Eurasian Studies as a think tank with the aim to contribute to understanding of the current political affairs in the sub-regions of the evolving Eurasia, envisions the building of a network of scholars and experts to facilitate intellectual interchanges and cooperation. Pursuing this mission, AVİM collaborates with national and international governmental and non-governmental organizations, independent policy institutions and universities, and aims to enhance those partnerships. In this respect, we are particularly satisfied with the panel titled "25 Years of Turkey-Ukraine Diplomatic Relations: Regional Developments and Prospects for Enhanced Cooperation," which is a result of the cooperation among AVİM, the Embassy of Ukraine in Turkey, and METU Eurasian Studies Master Program.

AVİM holds the idea that a major transformation is taking place in the balances of the world. The center of gravity of the world has been gradually shifting from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific. This change also manifests itself in the position of Turkey; whereas during the cold-war era Turkey was defined as "the easternmost post of the West," now, as a result of the changes in the international balance, Turkey is gradually becoming also the westernmost part of the East.

We observe that the Turkish Foreign Policy is making an effort to situate itself to this major transformation through a series of adjustments and adaptations. Turkey recognizes that not only herself moves to the center, but the Wider Black Sea region is becoming the core of the evolving Eurasia. This does not mean that Turkey is looking for an alternative that would indicate a break away from the West. Our understanding of Eurasian development is becoming the nexus to Asia and Europe, strongly attached to the West, yet also opening up to the East.

Within this framework of global change, Turkish-Ukrainian relations have a pivotal importance for Turkey's outlook, since Ukraine is a major player in the Wider Black Sea region.

Ukraine's geographical position which makes her an important spot for the East-West connection; her economic and human potentials; the developing economic relations between Turkey and Ukraine; and the security concerns in the region that are relevant to both Turkey and Ukraine render good and functional relations between two countries necessary and beneficial not only for Turkey and Ukraine, but also for the emerging connectivity between Europe and Asia. Ukraine is currently facing grave challenges. Turkey is on the record for her principled support of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

I believe that it sould be the objective of Turkish and Ukrainian policy makers and experts to make use of every opportunity and even challenges for the better development of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Ukraine. For that, ties between Turkish and Ukrainian policy makers and scholars needs to be further strengthen. In view of that, I trust, the panel titled "25 Years of Turkey-Ukraine Diplomatic Relations: Regional Developments and Prospects for Enhanced Cooperation," which brought scholars from Turkey and Ukraine together to discuss issues relevant to Turkey-Ukrainian bilateral relations has been a contribution to further developing our relations.

Ambassador (R) Alev KILIÇ
AVİM Director

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Professor Ayşegül Aydıngün works at the Department of Sociology of the Middle East Technical University (METU). She is affiliated to the Eurasian Studies Master Program at METU. Her research interests are ethnic/national identity formation; post-Soviet nationalisms; forced/ethnic migration in Central Asia and the Caucasus (i.e. Meskhetian/Ahıska Turks; Crimean Tatars) and museology. She carried out field research in Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. She has articles and edited books on ethnic and religious minorities of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

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Turgut Kerem Tuncel

Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel is a Senior Analyst at Ankara-based Center for Eurasian Studies and the Managing Editor of the peer-reviewed journal "International Crimes and History." After completing his undergraduate studies in Psychology (major) and Sociology (minor), he earned his MA in Political Science from Bilkent University (Ankara). He worked as research and teaching assistant at Bilkent and İstanbul Bilgi universities. He earned his PhD in Sociology and Social Research from *Università degli Studi di Trento* in 2014. His book based on his PhD dissertation titled "Armenian Diaspora: Diaspora, State and the Imagination of the Republic of Armenia" was published in the same year. Dr. Turgut Kerem Tuncel's research focuses on Eurasian geopolitics, Wider Black Sea region, Ukraine Crisis and Crimea, and the Caucasus.

TURKISH-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY: CONTINUITIES AND STRATEGIC REQUIREMENTS*

Turgut Kerem TUNCEL
Ayşegül AYDINGÜN

Introduction

The diplomatic relations between Turkey and Ukraine were reestablished on 3 February 1992. By the year 2018, these relations have already entered their 26th year. In those twenty-six years, these two countries have succeeded in instituting and advancing social, economic and political relations between each other. One should be aware of the fact that the history of the Turkish-Ukrainian relations is not limited to these twenty-six years. On the contrary, Turkish-Ukrainian relations have a much longer history and deep rooted background. In fact, one can extend the history of contacts between Turkic peoples and the Eastern Slavic peoples, the *Rus* (not to be confused with the Russians), some of which became the Ukrainians in the 19th century at least to more than a millennium back. Throughout centuries, Turco-Tatar peoples of the Western *Deşt-i Kıpçak*[1] and the *Rus* people of Eastern Europe inhabiting the lands of the *Kievan Rus*[2] had been in various forms of interaction ranging from trade to war. In the later centuries, relations between the *Rus*, proto-Ukrainian and Ukrainian peoples, on the one hand, and the Turkic and Turkish peoples on the other hand continued, despite intervals.

Unfortunately, although these promising developments across the Black Sea in the last two and a half decades and the millennia-long history, a book-length historical study on Turkish-Ukrainian relations is still not on the bookshelves. There are a number of academic articles and book chapters on this topic, but their number is much fewer than desired. In brief, a comprehensive literature on the history of Turkish-Ukrainian relations is still yet to come to sight. What we, as political scientists, scholars of area studies, sociologists and so on, know about the Turkish-Ukrainian history largely depends on what we infer from the studies

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1 Western *Deşt-i Kıpçak*, also referred to as Western Tatary; Western Cumania; the Kipchak Steppe; Pontic Steppe, is the vast steppeland between the western shores of the Caspian Sea in the East, the eastern shores of the Dniester River in the West, the northern shores of the Black Sea in the South, and the South of Kyiv-Chernihiv-Pereiaslav region in the North.

2 The territory of the Kievan Rus stretched roundly from the present-day Finland in the North to the South of Kyiv-Chernihiv-Pereiaslav region in the South, and from the Baltics in the West to Nizhniy Novgorod in the East.

on Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish-Russian, and Ukrainian-Russian histories or some other generic historical studies on the Wider Black Sea region, with the exception of the above mentioned shorter studies. Obviously, this is one of the major drawbacks, since knowing history helps us to understand today and to have perspectives for the future.

This study reviews the main episodes within the millennia-long Turkish-Ukrainian history in order to demonstrate that, in many turning points in the history of the Ukrainians, we see the relevance of the "Turkish factor" in varying degrees. In other words, our review reveals that both in the making of the Ukrainians and Ukraine in the historical course, Turco-Tatar people played certain roles. Our historical review and the following summary of the contemporary relations between Turkey and Ukraine reveal the existence of certain patterns with respect to Turkish-Ukrainian relations. In the second part of this study, we discuss these persistent patterns, the most outstanding of which is the salience of the "Russian factor" after the 17th century in the development and evolution of the Turkish-Ukrainian relations. Upon that, in the last part of the study, we discuss the potential for regionalization.

The *Rus* and the Turco-Tatar Peoples until the Dissolution of the Kievan Rus

During the prehistoric times (app. 1150 BCE-CE 850), present-day Ukraine's steppe and forest-steppe areas were dominated by the nomadic tribes originating from the steppes of Central Asia, while the coastal regions were under the Greek and Romano-Byzantium influence. Although the former were described as raiding barbarians in Greek, Romanian, Byzantine and Arab sources of the time, archeological findings in the 20th century reveal that, these nomadic tribes integrating the sedentary populations into themselves created a sophisticated civilization and established a stable environment that promoted trade and commerce in the region.[3]

Among those nomadic peoples, by the arrival of the Khazars, a Turkic group originally inhabiting in the westernmost parts of Turkistan, to the Northern Black Sea steppelands and further North, a new era was opened in the present-day Southern and Eastern Ukraine. Establishing themselves in the territory between lower Don, lower Volga, and Kuban-Terek River valleys,[4] Khazars brought stability and peace to the region by establishing diplomatic relations with the Byzantines and providing protection against the nomadic tribes coming from the East, as well as the Persians and the Arabs. This peaceful stability facilitated the growth of commercial activities in the region.[5] The *Pax Chazarica* that lasted from mid-7th

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3   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine: The Land and its Peoples* (2nd Edition) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 25-26.

4   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…*, 45-47.

5   Orest Subtelny defines Khazar Empire as a "unique commercial empire." Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (4th Edtion) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 22.

century to mid-9th century greatly contributed to the development of the region.[6] It should be noted that, despite the image of the "barbarian nomads coming from the East," Khazars achieved to establish *Pax Chazarica* through trade and diplomacy rather than war.[7] The Slavic inhabitants of the present-day Ukraine, who originated from the present-day central and Eastern Poland, Southern Belarus and Northwestern Ukraine and gradually expanded towards the South,[8] also benefitted greatly from the *Pax Chazarica*.[9]

Yet, Ukrainian and also Russian historians usually begin the Ukrainian and the Russian histories from the onset of the *Kievan Rus* in late-9th century for regarding this as the beginning of the Slavic history of Ukraine and Muscovy/Russia.[10] The significance of the *Kievan Rus* (late-9th and mid-13th centuries) both as a significant political entity and, probably more than that, as a nation building myth for the Ukrainians and the Muscovites/Russians in the later decades cannot be overlooked. It is because of this significance, even today a heated debate over the "ownership" of the *Kievan Rus* is still going between Ukrainian and Russian historians. Examination of the history of *Kievan Rus*, too, reveals the historical relevance of the Turkic peoples for this state.

The birth and the growth of the *Kievan Rus* went parallel with the demise of the Khazar Khanate. In formative years of the *Kievan Rus*, the fourth *Kievan Rus* prince Sviatoslav in search of expanding his domain launched a campaign against the Khazars and raided the Khazar capital at *İdil* on Volga in 964.[11] The advances of the Magyars (forefathers of the present-day Hungarians) and the Pechenegs (a Turkic tribe; in Turkish Peçenek) into the Khazar steppelands had also speeded up the dissolution of once mighty Khazar Kahante in late 960s. Following the demise of the Khazar Khanate, Pechenegs emerged as the dominant power in the region. In fact, retrospectively speaking, Sviatoslav's assault on the Khazars costed the *Kievan Rus* a buffer between itself and the Pechenegs, who began to challenge the eastern and southern frontiers of the the *Kievan Rus*.[12] As an irony, Sviatoslav died in the hands of the Pechenegs after an unsuccessful campaign against the Byzantium.[13] Pechenegs, then were worn down by another Turkic tribe, namely the *Kıpçak*s (also known as Qipchaqs, Cumans, Polovtsian) by the early 11th century, and finished off by the *Kievan Rus* Prince Iaroslav the Wise (1036-1054).[14]

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6   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*…, 37-38.

7   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 47.

8   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 39&42.

9   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 50.

10   See for example, Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008).

11   Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 29.

12   Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 31.

13   Charles Ziegler, The History of Russia (2nd Edition) (Santa Barbara:Greenwood Press, 2009), 10.

14   Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 34.

While *Kıpçaks* became a principal power, different tribes including the Pechenegs found refuge in the *Kievan Rus* domain, formed a new Turkic tribal confederation called *Karakalpaks*, who settled at the southern frontiers of the *Kievan Rus and* remained loyal to their *Rus* rulers.[15] *Kıpçak*s remained as a main power threatening the borderlands of the *Kievan Rus* in the South and the East until late 12th century. As the *Kıpçak*s' power began to decline, while some of them moved towards the present-day Bulgaria, the remaining parts got more and more integrated with the *Kievan Rus* by marriages and other ways.[16]

One of the essentials of the mainstream Ukrainian and Russian historiographies is the era of the so-called "Tatar yoke" that lasted between the mid-13th and mid-15th centuries. According to this historiography, the 'barbarian Mongol-Tatar hordes' of Chingizid Empire ran over the *Rus* lands with outmost savagery, leaving a ruin behind everywhere they passed by. In fact, this historiography has been an instrument for the Ukrainians and the Russians to claim for their superior "western identity," in contrast to the "savage Asiatic identity."[17]

However, Paul Robert Magocsi, Serhii Plokhy and some other historians present another picture of the so-called "Tatar yoke." Plokhy argues that it was not before the last quarter of the 16th century that the myth of the "Tatar yoke" was invented in Muscovy and gained popularity by the second half of the 17th century through the intermediacy of the Kyivian literati. He states that whereas one function of that myth was to construct a heroic past for the Muscovite state, the other was to argue that it was Russia, who defended the West from the Tatar devastation.[18]

After the Mongol tribal leader Chengiz Khan gathered Mongol and Turkic tribes of Eastern Turkistan together, he began expanding his domain in all directions to build up the largest political entity in history, known as the Chingizid Empire. The armies of the Chingizid Empire, the soldiers of which were mostly composed of Tatar and Turkic peoples, marched towards Eastern Europe and the *Kievan Rus* for the first time in 1222. They first met and defeated the Alans and the *Kıpçak*s, after which *Kıpçak*s joined forces with the *Kievan Rus* but to no avail.[19] In the second half of 1230s, Chingizid armies returned back to Eastern Ukraine and eliminated the *Kıpçak*s. Following that, some *Kıpçak*s became subjects of the Mongols, some

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15 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 66-68&79& 94-95.

16 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 87&90; see also Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History…,* 39.

17 For the instrumentalization of the myth of the "Tatar yoke" in Russian historiography in these lines see, Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 132-133.

On the other hand, the Eurasionist school that developed in 1920s in Russia and gained popularity recently evaluate the era odd the "Tatar yoke" positively. According to this school, during the Mongol-Tatar period, Muscovy gained its peculiar identity as a result of the mix of Asian and European elements within the Muscovite / Russian identity. This gave Muscovy / Russia a peculiar (and superior) identity vis-à-vis Europe (see, Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations…*, 133; Charles Ziegler, *The History of Russia…*, 17).

18 Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations…*, 135.

19 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 110-111.

fled to the West, and some fled to *Kievan Rus*. Chingizid armies continued their march towards the *Rus* principalities of the *Kievan Rus*. They conquered Kyiv in December 1240 and established the western region of the Chingizid Empire, the *Kıpçak* Khanate, also known as the Golden Horde.[20] Although founded by the Mongols, majority of the Golden Horde population was composed of the *Kıpçak*s, who, in time, became rulers. Golden Horde established vassalage on *Rus* principalities up until 1480.

Magocsi states that, whereas the Golden Horde was cruel to the *Rus* principalities which did not submit themselves, it left alone those who complied and paid annual tributes. Magocsi adds that this was not specific to the Golden Horde, but a common policy of all the states in that time.[21] In this respect, one significant fact is that under the vassalage of the Golden Horde, which was tolerant to foreign religions, Orthodox Church in the *Rus* lands consolidated its hegemony over the *Rus* people. Serhii Plokhy even argues that there was a sort of alliance between the Golden Horde and the *Rus* metropolitanate in Northern *Rus*.[22] Magocsi argues that, in spite of the standard historiography, the so-called "Tatar yoke" brought a stability to the *Rus* lands in return of tributes.[23]

As it can be seen, from the earliest times to the last centuries of the middle ages, Turkic peoples had been an important actor on the historical stage set on the Ukrainian theatre. Importantly, in most of the present-day Ukrainian territory, presence of the Turkic peoples dates earlier than that of the Slavic peoples. The history shows that Turkic peoples played a major role in the political history of these lands not only as political and military powers, but also as merchants and diplomats. In fact, the history reveals that Slavic peoples' immigration to Western and Southern Ukraine was motivated by the peaceful stability set by the Khazars. Besides that, although we habitually speak about Ukrainians, Russians, and Turks and so on while talking about the Middle Ages and the earlier times, the history shows that there were no concrete social or ethnic borders but just permeable boundaries allowing fluidity of identities and loyalties. As the above review demonstrates, on many occasions, groups belonging to different *ethnies* amalgamated with each other. Likewise, loyalties were formed rather on common interest in the face of opportunities or challenges than ethnic identities.

The Emergence of the Muscovite / Russian and Ruthenian Identities

One of the interesting debates that has been going on since the 19th century among the Ukrainophile/Ukrainian, Belarusophile/Belarusian and Russian historians is related to the origins of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian nations, and the

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20   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…*, 113-114.

21   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…*, 111.

22   Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations…*, 134.

23   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…*, 114-115.

interrelatedness or its absence among them. Categorically speaking, nationally minded Ukrainian and Belarusian historians in search for genuine ethnic or national identity separate from a common "all-Russian" ethnic or national identity claim for either distinct ethnic roots or distinct evolutions of the Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian national identities from the common *Rus* ethnic roots. On the other hand, nationally minded Russian historians, just like the Soviet historians did, advocate that these three modern Eastern Slavic nations are indeed of the one and the same all-*Rus* national identity, which once disunited from each other by the dissolution of the *Kievan Rus*. The tacit implication of this hypothesis is that these disunited Eastern Slavic nations would, and probably should, once again reunite. Importantly, the advocates of this hypothesis either overtly or covertly imply that the *Rus* and the Russian identities are indeed the same. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, a well-known scholar of the Russian history in the USA as a stereotypical representative of the nationalist Russian historiography, for example, in his "Russian Identities: A Historical Survey" (2005) refers to the population of the *Kievan Rus* as "Kievan Russians," thoroughly disregarding and blurring the different meanings of the nouns *Rus* (рус), *Rusinskiy* (русинский), R*usskiy* (русский).[24] On the other side, some Ukrainian and Belarusian historians claim for the existence of separate Eastern Slavic national identities already in the *Kievan Rus* times.[25]

First and foremost, the hypothesis of a *Rus* or Russian national identity, or Ukrainian and Belarusian nations existing since the *Kievan Rus* times should be rejected at once, as a primordialist understanding, if not for anything else, then for the simple fact that the contemporary scholarship on the nations and nationalism evidently argues that nations are the products of modernity. In this sense, it should be noted that some Ukrainian historians even argue that what we refer as the Slavic peoples of the *Kievan Rus* today was not even composed of a single *ethnie*. According to that view, the people who lived around Kyiv were ethnically different from those who lived in the North.

On this question, we rather tend to agree with Serhii Plokhy and the like-minded historians. Firstly, one should be aware of the fact that the *Kievan Rus* population was not composed of just Slavic people. As shown above, among the subjects of the *Kievan Rus*, there were different peoples including the Turkic groups. Secondly, although a common high-culture among the elite of the princedoms of the *Kievan Rus* existed and certain common cultural, linguistic and religious similarities created an identity among the Slavic peoples of the *Kievan Rus*, this does not mean that we can speak about an all-encompassing ethnic unity or a solidified "imagined community" of the *Rus*. After all, in the absence of instruments and mechanisms that would facilitate ethnic homogenization and a *Rus* imagined community, local

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24 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities…*

25 Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations…*, esp. 50-56&354-361.

identities and loyalties were prevalent among the population of the *Kievan Rus*, which is, among other things, evidenced by the ongoing struggles among the *Rus* princedoms within the *Kievan Rus* domain. In brief, even though we can speak about a certain degree of ethnic unity, it is not possible to claim for the existence of a self-conscious *Rus* nation, not to speak of Ukrainian, Belarusian or Russian nations.[26]

Again in line with Serhii Plokhy and the like-minded scholars, we can say that the formation of three modern national identities, i.e., Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian, are constructed as a result of political developments, that is, the emergence of the rule of different states on the *Rus* lands, following the demise of the *Kievan Rus*. In the light of this perspective, we hold the idea that in the formation of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian (proto) national identities, the relevance of the Turco-Tatar factor, together with the Lithuanian, Polish and Muscovite (Russian) factors emerge.

When the Chingizid armies arrived in the present-day Ukraine, *Kievan Rus* was already in a state of disintegration. As a result of this disintegration process, three independent and powerful princedoms, namely Novgorod in the East, Vladimir-Suzdal in the Northeast (later Moscow became the dominant power within this entity), and Galicia-Volhynia in the Southwest were born. These princedoms together with other princedoms engaged in a power struggle with one and other and the center in Kyiv. These struggles, in fact, brought the final demise of the *Kievan Rus*.

As these princedoms continuously fought each other, they formed alliances with the Golden Horde in order to defeat rival *Ru*s princedoms, and other times fought with Golden Horde. Eventually, Galicia-Volhynia remained the only independent *Rus* state after the dissolution of the *Kievan Rus*, which became a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1370. Actually, after the demise of the *Kievan Rus*, for two centuries or so, Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Golden Horde remained as two powers in Eastern Europe and much of the present-day Ukraine by the last quarter of the 14th century.[27] These two powerful states shared those lands; whereas Grand Duchy of Lithuania which later became Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in 1569 ruled over the western and the southern parts former *Kievan Rus* land, Golden Horde ruled the northeastern parts.

This division of the former *Kievan Rus* lands resulted in disparate developments in the Northeastern, and Western and Southern *Rus* lands. Accordingly, whereas in the former domain, the Muscovite identity, which evolved into the present-day Russian identity, began to flourish, in the latter domain a Ruthenian (*Rusyny* or *Russes*) identity grew. Out of this Ruthenian identity, modern Ukrainian and

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26   Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine…*, 29.

27   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 85&110&115&129-130.133-137.

Belarusian national identities developed in time and as a result of later political developments.[28]

The Cossack Ukraine, Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans

Although tracking the evolution of separate Muscovite-Russian and Ruthenian identities (as a pre-Ukrainian and pre-Belarusian identities) out of the *Rus ethnie* starting from the second half of the 14th century is quite easy, doing the same for the formation of separate Ukrainian and Belarusian identities out of the Ruthenian identity is both thorny and fascinating. Several factors that led to these formations such as the relatively liberal socio-political context in Western Ruthenia (present-day Belarus) in contrast to Polish approach to Latinize the Southern Ruthenia (present-day Ukraine); the absence of learning centers in Western Ruthenia in contrast to Kyiv in the South as such a center; the assimilatory policies of the Russian empire in Western Ruthenia in contrast to the Austro-Hungarian policy that favored Ukrainophiles in Galicia as a counter-power to Polish strength; the ban on the Uniate Church (Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church) in Western Ruthenia in contrast to the paradoxical role of the Uniate Church (Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church) in the present-day Western Ukraine in preventing forced or voluntary assimilation of the proto-Ukrainians into Polish identity; the role of the same church in preventing assimilation of the Western proto-Ukrainians into Orthodox Russian identity, could be pointed out.[29]

In addition to these, one should not overlook the substantial factor of the "legendary" Cossacks as a major cause for the emergence of the Ukrainian nation and an instrument for the construction of the Ukrainian national identity. The Cossacks, who became a significant political-military force in the middle Dnieper region by the 17th century, not only laid the foundations of Ukrainian proto-state structures, but also provided a warehouse for the construction of national myths for Ukrainian nation-builders, together with the myth of the *Kievan Rus*.[30]

Starting from the last decades of the 16th century, *Rus* peasants fleeing from serfdom, harsh living conditions, religious persecution in Ruthenia under the Polish-Lithuanian rule, and the Muscovite domain began to inhabit the lands in the middle Dnieper region, which in the Ukrainian and Russian historiography are usually, yet misleadingly, referred to as "no man's land" or "wild lands," despite the fact that these lands were, indeed, not "no man's," but historical Turco-Tatar lands. Owing to this fact, *Deşt-i Kıpçak*, the historical Turco-Tatar soil, became the ground on which the Cossack political entity took root and flourished.

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28   Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*…, 355-359.

29   See, Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*….; Andrew Wilson, The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation (4th Edition) (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 40-57.

30   Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the Past* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 167-168.

These runaway peasants taking advance of the loose Lithuanian-Polish control in the left-bank and adopting some organizational and cultural patterns of the Turco-Tatars, organized themselves as farmer and raider communities, and in the end of the 16th century became the "legendary" Cossacks. At this point it should be noted that the term Cossack comes from the Turkish word *Qazaq* or *Kazak* meaning adventurer, free, footloose or unencumbered. Although a quite questionable hypothesis, some historians, mostly in their endeavor to prove the separateness of the Ukrainians from the Russians, argue that Cossacks were of a different ethnicity, that is, they were largely the descendants of the Khazar Empire.[31] Whatsoever the academic worth of these arguments is, what is unanimously accepted is that there were also Crimean Tatars among the Cossacks.

As the Cossacks became a significant political/military power in the end of the 16th century, they began launching raids to Ottoman and Crimean Tatar fortresses in the present-day Southern Ukraine. They also launched sea raids to Ottoman shores in the Southern Black Sea (Sinop and Trabzon, for example) across the Black Sea. A major maritime battle took place between the Cossack and the Ottoman fleets in 1625. It can be argued that it was by the emergence of the Cossack naval force, Black Sea ceased to be an "Ottoman lake." As the Cossacks, who in popular imagination are mostly associated with the steppes, became a considerable sea force, Ottomans ,in 1648, considered employing the Cossack naval force in a war against Venice. On the other hand, Muscovy utilized the Cossack naval power in its campaigns against the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans.[32]

The Cossacks strengthening their military and political organizations began to rebel against the Lithuanian-Polish rule starting from the late 16th century, showing an increase both in number and strength in 1630s. This gave another impetus for the military and political relations among the Cossacks, Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans. Among the Cossack chefs that led rebellions against the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, who led the Cossack the rebellion between 1648 and 1654 and established the Cossack Hetmanate, was the most significant one.

Rebelling to overthrow the Lithuanian-Polish rule, Khmelnytsky sought alliance with different and often antagonist powers, including the Crimean Khanate, then a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. Khmelnytsky also sent envoys to Istanbul in 1648 and 1649 to secure support of the Ottomans for his cause. Eventually, Crimean Tatars engaged in an alliance with Khmelnytsky's forces with their own particular objectives, which were not precisely parallel to those of Khmelnytsky. Whatsoever

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31   For the theory of the Khazar origins of the Cossacks see Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine and Russia*…37-38. Serhii Plokhy, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations*…, 340-342.

32   Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 127; Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Facts On File, 2009), 149-150.

was the idea of the Crimean Tatars, Victor Ostapchuk argues that unless the Tatar cavalry had joined Khmelnytsky's forces, although at certain moments Crimean Tatar Khan İslam Geray prevented Cossacks' decisive victories against the Lithuanian-Polish forces, Khmelnytsky revolt could not have grown strong enough to become the major Cossack uprising.[33]

Historical records reveal that Khmelnytsky requested Ottoman mandate against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Yet, the Ottomans who were waging a war in Crete and encountering internal difficulties, declined despite the diplomatic exchanges in 1648-1651.[34] Failing to achieve substantial support from the Ottoman's or elsewhere, Khmelnytsky eventually found the needed protection from Muscovy. In 1654, the Pereiaslav Treaty, which is still hotly debated,[35] was signed between Khmelnytsky and the Tsar's envoys. According to this treaty, Moscow took the Cossack Ukraine under its protection. However, the 1654 Pereiaslav Treaty had been a turning point in the Ukrainian history as Muscovy's colonization of Ukraine to turning it into *Malorossiya* (Little Russia) and the proto-Ukrainian into *Malorusskie* (little Russians) began with this treaty.[36] Retrospectively speaking, if the Sublime Porte in Istanbul had granted mandate to Ukraine, not only the history of Ukraine, but the entire history of the Northern Black Sea and the Caucasus could have flowed through radically different channels. In this vein, it should be noted that the colonization of Ukraine by Muscovy went parallel with the Muscovy's gaining a strong hold in Northern Black Sea and further advanced into Kuban region and the Caucasus. Given the importance of the Caucasus for the security of both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, we can argue that the 1654 Pereiaslav Treaty had consequences in the Turkish history, too.

The integration of Ukraine into the Russian Empire was a thorny path. After the Pereiaslav Treaty, Cossack hetmans continued fighting against their Lithuanian-Polish overlords or "big Muscovite brother." Similar to Khmelnytsky, two of the anticipated allies of these hetmans were the Crimean Tatars and the Ottomans. Only eleven years or so, after the "reunion of the Russian brothers" (to replicate one of the misleading clichés of the Russian historiography)[37] by the Pereiaslav Treaty, the right-bank Hetman Petro Doroshenko (ruled 1665-1676) initiated a rebellion to overthrow the Lithuanian-Polish and the Muscovite rules, and to unite the divided Cossack Ukraine. To achieve this goal, he signed a treaty with the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars.[38] Accordingly, Ottomans granted Doroshenko protectorate and Doroshenko provided troops to Ottoman army in its campaign against the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in 1672. Yet, Ottomans, defeating the

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33   Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681"…, 130-132.

34   Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681"…, 133-135.

35   For debates on the Pereiaslav Treaty, see , Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine and Russia*…, 90-112.

36   For the discussions and diverse views on the Pereiaslav Treaty see, Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine and Russia*…, 196-212.

37   Serhii Plokhy, *Ukraine and Russia*…, 196-212, esp. 201.

38   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*…, 241&255.

Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in 1672 instead of letting Doroshenko to establish his rule, occupied a huge territory in the right-bank (at least one third of Ukraine) and established an Ottoman province that lasted until 1699.[39] In 1668, Hetman Ivan Brukhovetsky in the left-bank reached out the Crimean Tatars and the Porte in Istanbul against Muscovy, offering subordination in return of assistance. However, with the support of the Crimean Tatars, Doroshenko crossed to the left-bank and eliminated Brukhovetsky to become the only hetman in the entire Cossack Ukraine, for a short time, though.[40]

On the other hand, Ottomans also kept contacts with other hetmans rivaling Doroshenko such as Bohdan Khmelnytsky's son Yurii Khmelnytsky (ruled 1677-1681), who was appointed as the Prince of Ukraine by the Ottomans. Ottomans and Yurii Khmelnytsky fought with Muscovite army and the Cossacks allied with the Muscovite army on the left-bank.[41]

For those who are familiar with the mainstream Russian historiography, the name Ivan Mazepa and the terms *mazepisti* (mazepa-ites) or *mazepinstvo* (mazepa-ism) that alludes to treachery and betrayal should not sound unacquainted. A competent hetman of the Cossack Ukraine between 1687–1709, Ivan Mazepa allied with the Swedes against the Russians during the Second Northern War (1700-1721). However, after the Swedes lost the Battle of Poltava in 1709, he took refuge at Ottoman-controlled Moldova and died there. Because of his "betrayal" to "all-Russian brotherhood" and "one and indivisible Russian state," the imperial Russian and the later Soviet historiographies downgraded Ivan Mazepa to a traitor. Aleksandr Pushkin, in his poem "Poltava," named Mazepa as a "Judas" and a "snake." On the other hand, for some Ukrainian nationalist political activists and historians the same Mazepa came to symbolize "the struggle for the independence of Ukraine."[42]

Eventually, after Mazepa's successor Hetman Pylyp Orlyk's failed attempt to initiate a revolt on the right-bank in 1711, the era of the Cossack rebellions came to an end. As a result, the present-day Ukrainian territory was shared by Muscovy, Lithuania-Polish Commonwealth and the Ottoman states. According to that *de facto* partition, autonomous territories in Ukraine, namely, Sloboda Ukraine, Zaporozhia and the Hetmanate went under Muscovite control. In 1765, 1775, and 1785, respectively, Muscovy abolished the autonomous statuses of these territories.[43] After the abolition of the Zaporozhian *sich*, the Cossacks who opposed Muscovy's policies fled to the Ottoman Empire and settled in the Danube River delta and

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39   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 241.

40   Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681"…, 140.

41   Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681"…, 139-145; Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 241.

42   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 253-254. For Ivan Mazepa see, Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 253-263.

43   Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 277-290

formed the Danubian *sich* in the same year. However, displeased with the Ottoman hegemony, some of the Cossacks in Danube considered moving either to Austro-Hungary or back to Ukraine. When some of them left for Ukraine, Ottomans perceived that as a betrayal and destroyed this Cossack *sich*.[44]

Ukrainian Nationalists in Galicia and the Ottomans during the World War I

Although from mid-17th to early 18th centuries, there were relatively intense diplomatic and military contacts between the Cossacks and the Porte in Istanbul, these contacts began to cease as the Cossack rebellions faded away and Moscow consolidated its hegemony over the Ukrainian territory. In fact, Muscovy, strengthening its hegemony over Ukraine, employed the Cossacks as a military force against the Ottomans. Among those employed by Muscovy against the Ottomans, Don and Kuban Cossacks played a significant role in Russians military campaigns against the Ottomans.[45]

Accordingly, there had not been any significant political or military relations between the (proto) Ukrainians and the Ottomans up until early twentieth century. A new period of diplomatic contacts started only when a Ukrainian nationalist movement seeking political independence emerged in Galicia and Ukrainian independence became a real possibility.[46]

The Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (*Soyuz Vyzvolennya Ukrayiny*- ULU) was formally founded in Lviv, then within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, on 4 August 1914. The ULU hoped for an independent Ukraine in the Russian held parts of Ukraine following the anticipated defeat of the Tsarist Russia in the World War I. With such hopes and the mediation of the Austro-Hungary, the ULU sent emissaries to the Ottoman Empire to lobby for its cause. The Porte in Istanbul together with the Central Powers, discussed plans about providing logistic and military support to a revolt in the Caucasus and Kuban regions that would be initiated by the Ukrainian nationalists to sabotage the war efforts of the Tsarist Russia. This plan known as the "Constantinople Action" was, however, dismissed. Despite that, the ULU emissaries continued their propaganda activities in the Ottoman capital and the Ottoman "Special Organization" (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*) kept its contacts with the ULU and provided logistic support, such as providing Ottoman passports and so on.[47]

With regard to the World War I era, one should recall that, in August 1916, Ottoman troops were sent to Galicia to give a hand to their allies. At the Galician front, these

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44 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 337.

45 Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire…,* 150.

46 Hakan Kırımlı, "The Activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (2006a): 177.

47 Hakan Kırımlı, "The Activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine…"

troops fought sight by side with the Ukrainian volunteer riflemen regiments until August 1917,[48] where approximately 12,000 Ottoman troops died.

Ukrainian and Turkish Relations between 1917 and 1922

Following the Bolshevik revolution in Russia on 7 November 1917, chaos prevailed in Ukraine. Until 1920, revolution and war became the characteristics of the Ukrainian lands. Overall, until the Bolsheviks constituted their authority all over Ukraine in October 1920, the situation in Ukraine remained a complete anarchy.[49] In 1920, Bolsheviks established their authority in much of the Ukraine, and the remaining parts were divided among Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania.[50]

Amid the chaos in the territories of the Russian Empire, on 20 November 1917 in Kyiv, Ukrainian Central Rada[51] proclaimed the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR) as a federal autonomous unit within Russia. However, Bolshevik dominated Kharkiv Soviet rejected the Central Rada's proclamation and refused its authority. On 25 December 1917, the first Soviet Ukrainian Government subordinated to Bolsheviks in Petrograd was proclaimed in Kharkiv. On 25 January 1918, Central Rada in Kyiv proclaimed the independent UNR to take part in the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. There, Central Powers and the UNR signed a peace treaty on 9 February 1918. By that treaty, Central Powers recognized the UNR as a sovereign state. Yet, on the same day, Bolsheviks occupied Kyiv and drew Central Rada out of the town. Only by the advance of the German troops, Bolsheviks left Kyiv some twenty days later. The continuing German advance, on the other hand, forced Bolshevik Ukrainians centered in Kharkiv to flee to Soviet Russia. However, the UNR failed to establish its authority in the countryside, and instability and chaos endured in Ukraine accordingly. Most importantly for the Germans, the UNR failed to supply the grain it promised. Hence, on 28 April 1918, Germany disposed the UNR and established another government known as the Hetmanate. Following the defeat of Germany in World War I, on 14 December 1918, Hetmanate was overthrown by the organization known as the Directory. Meanwhile, in Western Ukraine within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, only few days before the end of the World War I, on 4 November 1918, Western Ukrainian People's Republic (WUPR) was proclaimed, following which a Ukrainian-Polish war broke out for the competing claims on Galicia. On 22 January 1918, Directory in the East and the WUPR united under the name Ukrainian People's Republic (UPR). However,

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48 Hakan Kırımlı, "The Activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine…," 196.

49 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 524.

50 Paul Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*…, 79.

   For a study on Ukraine between 1917 and 1922 see, Wolfram Dornik et al., *The Emergence of Ukraine: Self Determination, Occupation, and War in Ukraine, 1917-1922* (Edmonton and Toronto: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2015).

51 The Central Rada (Central Council) was formed on 17 March 1917, two days after the Tsar, at which all the major Ukrainian political parties were represented. However, these parties hardly had significant social bases (Paul Kubicek, The History of Ukraine…, 80-81).

squeezed between the Polish and Bolshevik guns and with different geopolitical orientations of the Directory and the WUPR, the UPR, together with the Directory and the WUPR eventually died out in May 1920; Galicia went under the Polish rule whereas Bolsheviks established their authority in the East.[52]

Ottomans welcomed the establishment of the UNR, which, they thought, would be a friendly buffer state between itself and the "Muscovite threat." In the meantime, hopes aroused in the Porte in Istanbul about the establishment of Muslim governments in Crimea and the Caucasus. In fact, Crimea and the Crimean Tatars turned into a serious issue with respect to Turkish-Ukrainian relations as the UNR remained reluctant to accept an independent republic in Crimea. However, this problem did not hamper the establishment of good relations and arrival of the Ottoman ambassador in Kyiv in October 1918. Ukrainian diplomats, too, continued their diplomatic missions in the Ottoman capital.[53]

In Autumn of 1920, Bolsheviks succeeded in predominating the Ukrainian lands except Galicia and Western Volhynia. In 1922, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established. At the end of this year, Soviet Ukraine became one of the four constituent republics of the Soviet Union. The Ankara Government in Turkey that led the Turkish War of Independence after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the WWI signed a Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Ukraine on 2 January 1922.[54] In June 1922, Ankara Government's Ambassador arrived in Kharkiv.[55] The Friendship Treaty between Soviet and the Ankara Government was of great importance for the latter as it was one of seven treaties that the Ankara Government signed before the signing of the Lausanne Peace Treaty on 24 July 1923. In fact, this treaty was another step forward to recognition of the Ankara Government in the international domain. Upon the establishment of the USSR on 30 December 1922 and later by the onset of the cold war in 1947, not only the political relations but also social and other relations between Ukraine and Turkey once again drifted off for almost seventy years.

Turkey's Relations with Post-Soviet Ukraine

In the last days of the Soviet Union, a referendum for independence was held in Ukraine on 1 December 1991. At this referendum which was held with 84.8% voter turnout, 90.32% of the voters voted for independence. On 24 August 1991 Central Rada (The Ukrainian Parliament) declared independence from the Soviet Union.

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52 Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine…,* 509-535&547-556; Kubicek, *The History of Ukraine*…, 82.90.

53 Hakan Kırımlı, "Diplomatic Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Ukrainian Democratic Republic, 1918-21," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (2006b): 202-209. Also see, Igor Tchernikov, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ve Türkiye–Ukrayna İlişkileri (1918-1938)," Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, accessed July 02, 2018, url: http://www.atam.gov.tr/dergi/sayi-55/mustafa-kemal-ataturk-ve-turkiyeukrayna-iliskileri-1918-1938.

54 Igor Tchernikov, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ve Türkiye–Ukrayna İlişkileri (1918-1938)," 320.

55 Igor Tchernikov, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ve Türkiye–Ukrayna İlişkileri (1918-1938),"322.

Two weeks after the independence referendum, that is, ten days before the official dissolution of the USSR, on 16 December 1991, Turkey recognized the independence of Ukraine. On 3 February 1992, the two countries signed a protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations. Following that, they signed the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation on 4 May 1992. Besides the developments in the bilateral relations, Ukraine became a founding member of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) which was founded as a Turkey-led initiative to institute stability in the Black Sea region. Ukraine's aim to integrate into the liberal-capitalist world and Turkey's objective to prevent instability in its surrounding countries motivated this rapid onset of the relations in early 1990s.

In 2000s, Turkey-Ukraine relations gained impetus. In 2003, following the visit of the then Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Turkey identified Ukraine as a "priority country." This is a proof of the strategic significance that Ukraine gained in Turkish foreign policy outlook. Soon after the Orange Revolution, in April 2004, the then Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, paid a visit to Ukraine. During this visit, the "Enhanced Joint Action Plan," which prepared the institutional framework for cooperation in different fields including security, economy, science and technology, energy, environment, and navigation, was signed. This action plan also included articles regarding Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. Cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine continued to be discussed by the visit of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül to Kiev in May 2005, and by the then Prime Minister of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovych's visit to Ankara in 2007.[56] In this vein, Turkey's sensitivities with respect to Black Sea security and Ukraine's perspective of NATO and EU membership shaped Turkey-Ukraine relations in 2000s.[57]

It is seen that no matter which political party is in power in both countries, relations between these two countries have steadily developed since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Also, Turkey and Ukraine continue to support each other on many matters to a large extent in international platforms such as United Nations, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Military relations between them are growing at the international level too, through partnership with mechanisms such as NATO-Ukraine Commission and BLACKSEAFOR and Black Sea Harmony in addition to bilateral cooperation. One of the very important steps in the further development of relations was the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Council (HLSC) in January 2011. This raised the relationship between the two countries to the status of a strategic partnership. In the same year, the "Agreement on the Mutual Abolition of Visas" was signed at the first meeting of

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56 Orta Karadeniz Kalkınma Ajansı, *Ukrayna Ülke Raporu*, 7-8, accessed July 6, 2018, http://www.oka.org.tr/Documents/Ukrayna_Ulke_Raporu.pdf.

57 Mithat Çelikpala, "Son Yirmi Yılda Türkiye'nin Azerbaycan, Gürcistan ve Ukrayna'ya Yönelik Dış Politikası ve Bu Ülkelerdeki Faaliyetleri," in *Bağımsızlarının Yirminci Yılında Azerbaycan, Gürcistan ve Ukrayna- Türk Dilli Halklar- Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, ed. İsmail Aydıngün and Çiğdem Balım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, 2012), 355-356.

the High-Level Strategic Council. The visa agreement which was the signal of the beginning of a new period has come in force since 2012.[58] The two countries moved one step further on 14 March 2017 when a passport-free regime was realized. Today, citizens of Turkey and Ukraine can visit these countries only with their valid ID cards. For the last couple of years, Turkish and Ukrainian officials have been negotiating to sign a Free Trade Agreement.[59]

Until the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation in February 2014, the Crimean Tatar issue was one of the major and at times sensitive topics between Ukraine and Turkey, especially due to the difficulties they experienced during their return to their homeland Crimea starting from 1989. Turkey, having a significant number of citizens of Crimean Tatar origin, always supported their return to their homeland Crimea and their integration into Ukraine. It is important to note that political and economic instability in post-Soviet Ukraine and the dominance of Russians in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea constituted an important obstacle to the return and the integration of the Crimean Tatars to the peninsula. Many Crimean Tatar demands were disregarded by the Crimean government including their recognition as the indigenous people of the peninsula. Their demand related to indigeneity was also overlooked by the Ukrainian state.

The occupation and illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014 by the Russian Federation has been a turning point not only for Turkey-Ukraine relations but also for the relations between the Crimean Tatar leadership and the Ukrainian government. As a result of the annexation, Turkey, Ukraine and the Crimean Tatar leadership got closer to each other and showed high solidarity against Russia's illegal actions.

Turkey strongly defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine and did not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula. Published on June 2015, the report of unofficial Turkish delegation on the situation of the Crimean Tatars after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea was based on the information obtained during the interviews conducted in Crimea on April 2015.[60] The report clearly revealed the oppression that was experienced by the Crimean Tatars and human rights violations suffered by those opposing the occupation including Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. It has also played an important role in the reshaping of the relations between Turkey, Ukraine, the Crimean Tatar leadership and the Crimean Tatar people. This report uncovered the violations related to the right to life and bodily integrity; security and freedom of individuals; the right to fair trial; freedom of expression, travel, demonstration and assembly; freedom of religion and conscience; the right to education and the use of the mother tongue; pressures

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58 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Relations between Turkey and Ukraine*, 2011, accessed June 29, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-ukraine.en.mfa.

59 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Relations between Turkey and Ukraine*…

60 *Crimea Report: The Situation of the Crimean Tatars since the Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation*, 2015.

on cultural life and media. Also, legal issues regarding citizenship and property were analyzed, again based on the interviews. Furthermore, this report revealed evidences with respect to the pressure and the surveillance experienced by the Crimean Tatar national movement members and feelings of fear, uncertainty and despair experienced by the Crimean Tatar community in general. This report also made clear how the principles of the Copenhagen Document (1990) and the Ljubljana Guidelines (2012) were violated by the *de facto* Crimean government.

The Crimean Tatar leadership voiced their strong determination in defending the territorial integrity of Ukraine and their refusal of Russia's annexation of Crimea at every opportunity both at the national and international levels. The other turning point was the Russian intervention and the war in the Donbas region that took place soon after the illegal annexation of the Crimea in April 2014. For many Ukrainians, this war was a traumatic fact challenging their perception of the Russians and Russia very strongly. The quick and determined resistance of the Crimean Tatars to the occupation of both the Crimea and the intervention of Russia in Donbas was of course thanks to their historical experiences with Russia. One can argue that non-violent protests of Crimean Tatars which keep universal human rights values above all in their struggle against the Russian Federation had a deep impact on the Ukrainian society in such a period of turmoil, and has been one of the factors contributing to the mobilization of Ukrainian nationalism and Ukrainian resistance to the Russian Federation. The resistance of Crimean Tatars led, on the one hand, to a new and much stronger alliance between the Crimean Tatar leadership and Ukraine and on the other, to the one between the Crimean Tatar leadership and Turkey. In addition to the three parties' adoption of a rationalist perspective, new social interactions and networks have been developed among them. All these developments not only caused a rapprochement between Crimean Tatar leadership and Ukrainian state but also between Ukraine and Turkey despite the development of relations between Turkey and the Russian Federation.

Although not a significant actor in Ukrainian-Turkish relations, the Meskhetian/Ahıska Turks, a Turkish Muslim community deported from Meskheti-Javakheti (Georgia) to Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 1944 are one of the victim communities in Donbas, which is an issue of high importance to stress. The beginning of their migration to Ukraine, Donestsk, Luhansk and to other Ukrainian cities goes back to 1989. Ahıska Turks migrated to different places within the Soviet Union including the Donbas region following the pogrom that took place in Fergana and in some other cities of Uzbekistan. These people were affected by the war in Donbas and many of them came to Turkey (Erzincan-Üzümlü and Bitlis-Ahlat) as settled migrants.

The Persistent Patterns of the Turkish-Ukrainian Relations throughout History

The above review reveals the existence of several consistent dynamics and characteristics prevailing in Turkish-Ukrainian relation over time. First and

foremost, Turkish-Ukrainian relations are mostly shaped by the Russian factor and developed as collateral of Turkish-Russian or Ukrainian-Russian relations. As the above review demonstrates, in the seventeenth century, the Cossacks appealed to the Ottomans in search for an ally vis-à-vis Russia; in the beginning of the World War I and afterwards, Ukrainian nationalists approached to the Ottomans with the same motive; it was the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the subsequent independence of Ukraine that opened a new page in Turkish-Ukrainian relations. Finally, only after the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and the onset of the conflict in Donbas, as well as the onset of the jet crisis between Turkey and Russia, Turkey and Ukraine moved towards each other for their analogous objectives vis-à-vis Russia.

In "Ukraine Prism: Foreign Policy 2015" related to Ukrainian approach to Turkey, it is stated that Turkey does not appear as a separate priority in Ukrainian foreign policy agenda. Rather, Turkey becomes a topic only indirectly with respect to Ukraine's relations with Russia and the West.[61] Despite the seemingly promising developments in the last two-three years in Turkish-Ukrainian relations, the last report of Ukraine Prism underlines the continuing lack of consistency in partnership and strategic vision.[62] Considering these, we can claim that, by and large, currently Russia continues to be an important factor in Turkish-Ukrainian relations just like it has been since the 17th century.

Since relations between Turkey and Ukraine are mostly determined by the Russian factor, we argue that Turkey and Ukraine still remain far from being independent actors vis-a-vis each other and game-settlers in the Wider Black Sea region. We believe that this feature of the Turkish-Ukrainian relations is the main reason why we, in 2018, still wait to see truly satisfactory and concrete results of this progress despite the upgrading of the relations between the two countries to a strategic partnership in 2011.

To continue with the same issue, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's foreign policy adopted a bipolar orientation as to the question of whether to belong to the East, i.e., *Russkiy Mir* (the Russian World) or to the West, i.e., the Euro-Atlantic structures and the EU. In fact, this bipolarity, to a large extent, determined almost every aspect of the Ukrainian politics and social developments, the most salient examples of which have been the political upheavals in 2004 (Orange Revolution) and 2014 (EuroMaidan or the Revolution of Dignity). Developing strategies from such a bipolar orientation, western oriented Ukrainian political elite noticed the "use value" of the NATO member and EU candidate Turkey as a link to the West. This perception led this elite to open up Ukraine to the "South," i.e., Turkey.

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61 Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism," *Ukraine Prism: Foreign Policy 2015* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2015), 48.

62 Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism," *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2017* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2018), 105-107.

Despite the above mentioned actors and dynamics, we do believe that Turkey and Ukraine, as the two important actors of the wider Black Sea region, should mobilize their own potentials for developing a regional identity and cooperation that integrates western elements with eastern elements and orientations. Such an approach would not only be consistent with the historical and geographical realities of these countries, but also give Turkey and Ukraine a significant geopolitical status in today's interconnected world. This would also help to construct solid relations among Wider Black Sea countries, and trigger new initiatives for regional cooperation and eventually the formation of a powerful region.

Certainly, this does not mean ignoring the significance of the third parties. Here the point we would like to highlight is the capacity and the necessity of both countries to initiate relatively independent bilateral relations and regional cooperation. Obviously, regional and global powers have been and will be important factors in Turkish-Ukrainian relations. However, in our opinion, these powers should remain factors, not determinants.

Secondly, history shows that the Ottomans had never had well-thought long-term strategic plans with respect to the Northern Black Sea region. Rather, Ottomans' main goal had been holding the key locations on the Northern Black Sea shore to preserve the Black Sea as an "Ottoman Lake." For that purpose, they delegated their trustworthy ally, the Crimean Tatars, the responsibility to control the steppelands of the Northern Black Sea region in order to create a buffer zone to protect the coastal regions. Certainly, there were some sound reasons that inclined the Ottomans to run such a policy, such as the low economic value of the steppelands to the North of the Black Sea and the difficulty of holding that territory for the geographical and topographical reasons, that is, the absence of natural defense lines against the threats coming from the North.[63] However, eventually, this policy costed the Ottoman Empire not just the dominance over the Black Sea, but also the Caucasus.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey's main approach had been the preservation of the status quo in the Wider Black Sea region. For this purpose, Turkey led the creation of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in 1992. However, Turkey mostly remained incompetent to build effective relations with Ukraine and the other newly independent countries of the region on well-planned road maps. The exception to that has been the development of a relatively more successful relations among Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Given the historical experience of the Ottoman Empire, we can argue that Turkey needs to develop a long sighted strategic policy on the Wider Black Sea region for its own security, if not for anything else. For that, Ukraine that eventually got on the track to liberate itself from the "little Russian" identity and mentality may

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63   See, Victor Ostapchuk, "Cossack Ukraine in and out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648-1681"…, 125.

become a major partner for its unfulfilled potentials. The strategic location of the Black Sea region as an East-West and North-South nexus and the huge scale projects that have been discussed or put into action to connect Asia and Europe such as the China-led Belt and Road Initiative or the Southern Gas Corridor. This would provide important advantages for nourishing regional cooperation not only between Turkey and Ukraine, but also with other countries of the region.

Thirdly, as the available research on the Turkish-Ukrainian history reveals that both during the Cossack rebellions and the World War I, Ottomans, whatever the reason, did not provide effective support to the Cossacks or the Ukrainian nationalists in their struggle against the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth or Tsarist Russia. Today, some Ukrainian scholars and policy makers either overtly or covertly complain that, notwithstanding the requirements of the declared strategic partnership, Turkey fails to provide effective support to Ukraine in its struggle for the de-occupation of Crimea and neutralization of the Russia-backed separatists in Donbas. Related to that, Turkey's decision about implementing a "balance policy" with Ukraine and Russia is a realistic position, which recognize both Ukraine and Russia as important actors of the Wider Black Sea region.

Fourthly, the absence of awareness and knowledge about Ukraine in Turkey is another salient pattern in the last century. Hakan Kırımlı, a prominent Turkish historian, writes in one of his studies that: "It should be noted that before the First World War Ukraine as a political concept, let alone its cause for independence, was virtually unknown to Ottoman press circles." [64] He adds that the first book in the Turkish language about modern Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalists and revolutionary movements was published only in 1915, after the envoys of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine stepped in Istanbul in October 1914.[65]

In June 2018, a quick search on the online book stores in Turkey reveals that there are only seven books on Ukraine in Turkish language available in the market, and only four of them are authored by Turkish scholars. The same vacuum could be observed within the Turkish academia, since there are only a handful of academics who study Ukraine. There is also a striking social distance between the two societies.

Development of academic studies on Turkey and Ukraine in both countries and the minimization of the social distance between the members of the two societies will definitely contribute to the development of the relations between the two countries and to regional integration. Related to that, contacts that started between Turkish and Ukrainian universities and research institutions, and the establishment of visa and passport free regime are promising.

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64   Hakan Kırımlı, "The Activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine...," 192
65   Hakan Kırımlı, "The Activities of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine...," 193

Conclusion

Based upon the above review of the Turkish-Ukrainian history and the noticeable persistent patterns in Turkish-Ukrainian relations bursting into sight, we argue that Turkey and Ukraine can develop strong and long-lasting strategic relations by coming to terms with the fact that geography is their destiny. Keeping this in mind, working on the idea of a regional awareness and perspective, both countries may contribute to the regional integration on solid grounds, which would help their own development. Developing solid economic and political relations with each other and other Wider Black Sea region countries with an inclusive and egalitarian approach may lead to the regionalization of the Wider Black Sea. It should not be overlooked that large scale projects such as the China-led Belt and Road Initiative, and the Southern Gas Corridor that have been put into action or deliberated to connect Asia and Europe would not only boost the strategic value of the Wider Black Sea region as a connector on the East-West and the North-South directions, but also would have the potential to contribute to the regionalization. In this anticipated process of regionalization of the Wider Black Sea, Turkey and Ukraine, having a vast potential due to their size, technological and industrial infrastructure, human capital, strategic position, cultural characteristics, and a long history, can take the lead with a "balance policy."

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TURKISH-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION ON NEW TRANSIT CORRIDORS

Anar SOMUNCUOĞLU

Introduction

Turkey and Ukraine share the similar position in between imagined Europe and Asia, being potential transit countries between different economic regions. When assessing Europe-Asia connectivity, if only land connections are taken into account, there are two crucial countries that connect Europe and Asia, namely Russia and Turkey. Any of land connections have to pass through either of them. However, by adding enclosed and semi-enclosed seas into equation, it is possible to reveal a third way through Ukraine. Since traditional continental transportation routes between Europe and Asia run through Russia, Turkey and Ukraine emerged as alternative transit countries between two continents.

After the Cold War, with the flourishing of relations between the post-Soviet countries and neighboring countries, new regions started to emerge or some regions experienced a process of expansion. The Cold War's "East" fell apart and new geopolitical definitions were created. In this process, three post-Soviet republics located in Europe-Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine- were designated in the European discourse as "Eastern Europe" while the previous "Eastern Europe" of the Warsaw Pact members gradually merged with Western structures becoming a part of economically and politically unified Europe. At the same time, Black Sea regional countries as well as the US and the EU contributed to the emergence of the Black Sea region.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in a new political map of Eurasia, but the post-Soviet area's economic ties, culture and transportation infrastructure continues to keep it apart from the rest of the world, sustaining the very existence of a separate "post-Soviet area." One of the main obstacles on the way of new trade connections in Eurasian landmass was that the post-Soviet countries were not connected with the world markets effectively, but instead were bounded by the Soviet infrastructure to Russia. The Iron Curtain not only existed in the middle of Europe but it also stretched along the Soviet borders and their adjacent regions. The Soviet Union created a monolith Soviet geography, in which all peripheral regions mainly had an access to the world through the Russian republic (RSFSR), and the Soviet periphery was disconnected from the surrounding regions.

The recent rush toward connectivity seems to be driven by ambitions of China, which finally announced its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013 upon investing in infrastructural projects for years. However, as this case demonstrates, interest in

connectivity is a natural result of strategic evaluations of regional countries to create new transit connections that will enable uninterrupted flow of goods and protect it from political fluctuations. Especially in the case of East-West connectivity, despite the of involvement of big international players, the regional countries along the way have their own interest in it. In this article, bilateral, regional and interregional frameworks of cooperation on connectivity will be scrutinized.

The Caucasus in Turkish and Ukrainian Foreign Policies

Looking from the Caucasus and Central Asia, both Turkey and Ukraine possess a similar strategic importance, providing the formers with alternative connections to Europe. Ukraine provides an alternative link between the EU and the Black Sea, consequently the Caucasus and Central Asia, Europe and Asia. Turkey is known for its position in the middle of Europe and Asia; thus can provide a link between Central Asia, the Caucasus and Europe, too. Hence, both Turkish and Ukrainian territories theoretically can provide connections between the Caucasus, Central Asia, and consequently to China and Europe.

After the dissolution of the USSR, Turkey initiated a policy of cooperation with all three post-Soviet Black Sea region states (Russia, Moldova and Ukraine) while simultaneously promoting regional cooperation in the whole Black Sea region by initiating the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. Soviet withdrawal from global power competition, the disappearance of a land border between the Soviet Union and Turkey in the Caucasus, the emergence of an independent Ukraine and the overall decrease of Russian influence on the surrounding regions contributed to the change in security situation around Turkey, particularly in its northern neighborhood. At the same time, economic liberalization of Russia and other post-Soviet countries presented an opportunity for Turkish business.

Although Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation has acquired different dimensions, economic cooperation remains the most developed one. In 2016, the total Turkish investments in Ukraine approximately reached 2 billion dollars. Likewise, more than 1 million Ukrainian tourists arrived in Turkey in the same year.[1] Being one of the main destinations for Ukranian export, Turkey turned out to be one of the major trade partners of Ukraine. In the 2010s the amount of bilateral annual trade has been fluctuating approximately between 3,8 and 6,7 billion Dollars, with an annual bilateral trade deficit mainly of Turkey.[2]

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1 Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Türkiye-Ukrayna Siyasi İlişkileri," accessed December 20, 2017, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-ukrayna-siyasi-iliskileri_.tr.mfa.

2 See, Chart 1.

Chart 1. Turkish trade with Ukraine (million dollars)

Year	Export	Import	Trade Volume	Balance of Trade
1992	36	90	126	-54
1993	37	473	510	-435
1994	76	535	611	-459
1995	199	856	1.055	-658
1996	268	762	1.029	-494
1997	337	918	1.255	-581
1998	274	989	1.263	-714
1999	226	774	1.000	-548
2000	258	982	1.240	-723
2001	289	758	1.047	-468
2002	313	991	1.304	-678
2003	445	1.332	1.776	-887
2004	576	2.509	3.085	-1.934
2005	821	2.651	3.472	-1.830
2006	1.121	3.059	4.180	-1.938
2007	1.481	4.519	6.000	-3.038
2008	2.188	6.106	8.294	-3.919
2009	1.033	3.157	4.190	-2.123
2010	1.262	3.830	5.092	-2.568
2011	1.731	4.811	6.542	-3.080
2012	1.830	4.392	6.223	-2.562
2013	2.191	4.515	6.706	-2.324
2014	1.730	4.272	6.002	2.542
2015	1.121	3.448	4.569	-2.326
2016	1.253	2.548	3.801	-1.294
2017	1.341	2.817	4.159	-1.476

Source: TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute)

Consequently, the rising Turkish-Ukrainian trade required the establishment of connections across the Black Sea. Since 1991 Turkish and Ukrainian governments as well as private sectors of two countries have been involved in development of new air, land and sea transportation links between themselves. At the same time, both countries participated in the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) program, initiated by the EU in order to facilitate transportation links between Europe and Asia through the Caucasus.

After the Cold War, supporting the independence of newly independent Turkic Republics became a new component of Turkish foreign policy. Despite general fluctuations in Turkish foreign policy and intense debates about Turkish identity as a country and a nation, cooperation with Turkic Republics has remained among

proclaimed priorities of Turkish foreign policy since 1991. Due to its cultural affinity and geographic proximity, Azerbaijan became the closest Turkish partner among other Turkic Republics. Given the geopolitical location of Georgia as a country that links Azerbaijan with Turkey, trilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey helped to provide direct access to Azerbaijan energy resources through Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipelines, thus overcoming the limitations of Soviet infrastructure. Although Turkish involvement in Central Asia is more modest than in the Caucasus, Turkey emerged as an important investor and a trade partner of the region, at the same time strengthening its cultural cooperation based on promotion of common Turkic identity.

Similarly, during the 1990s, Azerbaijan and Georgia became important partners of Ukraine, albeit for completely different reasons. Since the beginning of the 1990s some post-Soviet countries have experienced drastic tensions with Russia. By the mid-1990s, three of these countries- Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova were dismembered due to separatist activities supported by Russia. In 1997, with the persuasion of the US, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova established a mechanism of cooperation between themselves. Since then, the abbreviation GUAM became prominent as a platform of the so-called "pro-Western" countries in the post-Soviet area. The mere existence of like-minded countries and their cooperation within GUAM helped Ukraine to balance its relations with Russia. In 2006, GUAM members renamed the organization as Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM.[3] By this rebranding, GUAM members tried to present themselves as an organization based on commitment to European integration and liberal democratic values. Despite these claims, the real uniting platform of GUAM countries appears to be their independent foreign policies, particularly non-participation in Russian-led post-Soviet organizations. In this sense, the importance of Central Asian contries for Ukraine is limited to trade and transit.[4]

International Cooperation or Competition on Connectivity

Since the beginning of the 1990s, many powers presented their projects to facilitate connections in Eurasian landmass and link Europe and Asia by transportation infrastructure. The EU, the US and China put forward their visions to create continental links. Before the launch of the BRI, the most substantial working projects were EU's Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) and the Central Asia Regional Cooperation Program (CAREC), a multilateral project initiated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Investments within the scope of

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3   GUAM, "GUAM-History and Institutional Formation," 2007, accessed March 28, 2018, https://guam-organization.org/en/guam-history-and-institutional-formation/.

4   Foreign Policy Council "Ukrainian Prism," *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2016* (Kyiv: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2017), 151.

CAREC program reached 31,5 bln dollars in the period of 2001-2017.[5] While investing in energy and trade sectors, CAREC mainly builds and upgrades roads in member countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). By 2020, the total length of CAREC corridors is expected to reach nearly 30,000 km.[6] On the other hand, the EU has spent approximately 120 million Euros in total through the TRACECA program[7] while directly investing approximately 50 million Euros to rehabilitate infrastructure in participant countries[8].

Although Turkey and Ukraine are participant countries of TRACECA, they expressed their willingness to participate in the BRI as well, in accordance with their policies to become major transit countries between different economic regions. In November 2015, Turkey and China signed an agreement in an attempt to harmonize Turkish Middle Corridor vision with the Chinese BRI.[9] In December 2017, Ukraine and China signed an action plan with a proclaimed aim to cooperate on the BRI.[10]

Due to their geographic location, Ukraine and Turkey are potential transit countries along the BRI. The Middle Corridor is one of the possible routes of the BRI, which will provide China with an alternative continental connection with Europe, that is, bypassing Russia. Other than Central Asia, the Caspian and the Caucasus, the Middle Corridor can run through either Turkey or Ukraine. The road is bifurcated in Georgia, one going north to the Black Sea, another south in Turkish direction. Both Turkey and Ukraine have a desire to benefit economically from the development of this new route, however there are some differences in their approaches towards connectivity between Europe and Asia.

Although in line with European approach to connect Europe with Asia through Central Asia and the Caucasus, Turkish policy on the ground contributed to drastic changes of European and Western projects on connectivity. As a result of Armenia's hostile policy towards Turkey and its irredentist occupation of Azerbaijan, all connectivity projects in the South Caucasus with Turkish participation by-passed Armenia (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline). In the process, Turkey went beyond just being a part of the EU-led

5   CAREC, "CAREC Program," accessed March 3, 2018, https://www.carecprogram.org/?page_id=31.

6   CAREC, *CAREC 2020 Midterm Review*," 6, accessed January 20, 2018. https://www.carecprogram.org/uploads/2016-CAREC-2020-MTR.pdf.

7   S. Frederick Starr, Svante E. Cornell, Nicklas Norling, *The EU, Central Asia, and the Development of Continental Transport and Trade*, (Washington D.C.: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, 2015), 31.

8   TRACECA, "Investments," accessed December 1, 2017, http://www.traceca-org.org/en/investments/.

9   TBMM, "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti Arasında İpek Yolu Ekonomik Kuşağının, 21. Yüzyıl Denizdeki İpek Yolunun ve Orta Koridor Girişiminin Uyumlaştırılmasına İlişkin Mutabakat Zaptı," November 14 2015, accessed October 25, 2017, http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/1/1-0673.pdf.

10   "China and Ukraine Sign Slew of Agreements, Including on Belt and Road", *Xinhuanet*, December 5, 2017, accessed 20 February 20, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-12/05/c_136802960.htm.

connectivity project by initiating the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad project together with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Despite the EU and the US opposition to the project,[11] it was completed in October 2017 by Turkish and Azerbaijani financing.

In Turkey, being a bridge between Europe and Asia is a long-standing choice that has survived Turkish foreign policy fluctuations since the end of the Cold War.[12] The idea of connecting Turkey with the South Caucasus was developed according to the overall Turkish policy of the 1990s to promote transportation and economic connections with the post-Soviet countries. The idea of connecting Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey by a railroad was trilaterally discussed in 1993, [13] and was finally realized in 2017. Throughout the 1990's, Turkey positioned itself as a bridge between Europe and Asia, a critical transit country that will connect Caspian energy resources and economies with the West. In the 2000's, this positioning was sustained by subsequent AKP governments.

Unlike the case with Turkey, new railroad projects that were realized with the direct participation of Ukraine, are in line with European and American political preferences. Ukraine has been actively participating in improving of connectivity between the Black Sea and Baltic Sea regions through Viking and Zubr railroad projects. Viking Railway project, that connects Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, became operational in February 2003. Starting with only 175 TEU in 2003, an annual amount of freight transported by the Viking train exceeded 40,000 TEU in 2007.[14] In 2009, the Viking railway project was recognized as The Best European Project by the European Transport Commission.[15] Similarly, Zubr Train project between Estonia, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine, established another direct connection between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea. In general, Ukraine's priority in transportation is to integrate its transportation system with the European one. Regarding the establishment of new connections, in the first two decades after its independence, Ukraine had concentrated its connectivity activities on establishing connections between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea.

Before the major confrontation with Russia in 2014, Ukrainian interest in Trans-Caspian connectivity was more of a declarative nature and mainly took place within such multilateral initiatives as TRACECA and GUAM. In the period of 2007-2008, GUAM member states expressed their interest to develop their cooperation by

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11 Evaldas Klimas and Mahir Humbatov, *Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railroad: The Iron Ground for the Silk Road. Future Opportunities and Prospects,* (Vilnius: Mykolas Romeris University, 2016), 22.

12 Anar Somuncuoğlu, "AKP Döneminde Türkiye'nin Türk Cumhuriyetleri Politikası," in *Türk Dış Politikasını Nasıl Bilirdiniz?,* eds, Ümit Özdağ and Yelda Demirağ (Ankara: Kripto, 2017), 287-306.

13 Mitat Çelikpala and Cavid Veliyev, "Azerbaycan-Gürcistan-Türkiye: Bölgesel İşbirliğinin Başarı Örneği," *Policy Brief* 03 (Istanbul: Kadir Has University Center for International and European Studies, 2015), 14 accessed December 10, 2017, p.14, http://www.khas.edu.tr/cms/cies/dosyalar/files/CIES%20Policy%20Brief%2003.pdf.

14 Nicklas Norling, "Viking Railroad Connects Scandinavia with South Caucasus, Central Asia, and China," *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst,* November 2, 2011, accessed November 25, 2017, https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12384-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2011-11-2-art-12384.html.

15 Vikingtrain, "О проекте VIKING Train," accessed December 20, 2017, http://www.vikingtrain.com/about.

suggesting the development of the GUAM Transport Corridor (Baku-Tbilisi-Batumi- Ilyichevsk-Kyiv-Chisinau).[16] In June 2007, GUAM countries signed the agreement on multi-modal transportation in order to facilitate their role as transit countries of multi-modal transportation corridors.[17] In 2008, in The Development Concept of the GUAM Transport Corridor, the aim of integrating Viking and Zubr railway projects with a trans-Caspian connection was stated as a priority of GUAM cooperation. At the same time GUAM members expressed their interest in interaction with other connectivity projects, particularly with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project.[18] However, these priorities largely remained in paper until 2014.

If in the first two decades after the dissolution of the Soviet Union Western institutions' programs dominated in improving connectivity between Europe and Asia, in the 2010s China emerged as the main facilitator of Europe-Asia connectivity. Chinese announcement of BRI in 2013 and its obvious commitment to contribute billions of dollars in the development of connectivity, pushed countries towards competition to take place in the BRI.

China is involved in developing transportation infrastructure both in Turkey and Ukraine, particularly being interested in harbors. In 2015, the consortium of CMHI, Cosco and CIC became the majority shareholders of one of the biggest Turkish harbors- Kumport.[19] China Harbor Engineering Company (CHIP) completed the first phase of the dredging of Ukrainian Yuzhny port in January 2018, thus enabling it to harbor large cargo ships.[20] In 2018, the same company launched the second phase in Yuzhny port, and won a tender to dredge Chernomorsk port as well.[21] Chinese companies' interest in Turkish and Ukrainian harbors reflects the competitive nature of the BRI, where Chinese companies as well as potential transit countries compete for the BRI-related funds.

Ukraine and Turkey are interested in developing economic relations with China, and are trying to find their ways to the lucrative Chinese market. China appeared as an alternative destination for Ukrainian agricultural products, especially after Russia restricted the flows of Ukrainian agricultural export to Russia in 2012-2013.[22] As

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16 GUAM, "Development Concept for the GUAM Transport Corridor," February 19, 2008, accessed on March 19, 2018, https://guam-organization.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/concept-trasport-corridor-GUAM-en.pdf .

17 GUAM, "Agreement among Governments of Member-States of GUAM- on International Multimodal Transportation of Goods," June 19, 2007, accessed on 15 March 2018, https://guam-organization.org/en/agreement-among-govern-ments-of-member-states-of-guam-on-international-multimodal-transportation-of-goods/.

18 GUAM, "Development Concept for the GUAM Transport Corridor"…

19 Kumport, "Tanıtım ve Tarihçe," 2017, accessed on 5 November 2017, http://www.kumport.com.tr/tr-TR/tanitim-ve-tarihce/313638.

20 "China's Company Completes First Dredging Project at Ukraine's Black Sea Port", *Xinhuanet*, January 31, 2018, accessed March 12, 2018, http://xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/31/c_136937155.htm.

21 "Ukraine. Chinese Company to Dredge Chernomorsk Port", *Blacksegrain.net*, March 20, 2018, accessed March 26, 2018, http://www.blackseagrain.net/novosti/ukraine-chinese-company-to-dredge-chernomorsk-port.

22 Oleg Varfolomeyev, "Trade War with Russia Prompts Ukraine to Look for New Markets, Transit Routes", *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 13, no. 13, January 20, 2016, accessed March 10, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/trade-war-with-russia-prompts-ukraine-to-look-for-new-markets-transit-routes/.

seen from agricultural trade statistics[23], since that period, the amounts of Ukrainian agricultural export to China experienced a boost. Trade turnover between two countries increased by 18% in 2017, reaching 7.68 billion Dollars.[24]

Trans-Caspian Connection

Turkey and Ukraine continue to develop their transportation cooperation, extending it to interregional cooperation on bilateral and multilateral level. In addition to the development of bilateral connectivity, Turkey and Ukraine have been exploring the possibilities to become each other's transit partner. Ukraine can become an alternative route for Turkey to reach Central European and Baltic markets while there is a possibility to develop connectivity between Ukraine and Middle Eastern market through Turkish territory. Since two countries are neighbors by sea, becoming transit partners requires setting up intermodal freight transportation infrastructure that will enable to use different modes of transportation without losing time to handle the freight itself. While exploring their transit capabilities, two countries are especially eager to employ and develop their railroad infrastructure rather than road transportation. The result of cooperation in this direction is bilateral International Combined Freight Transportation Agreement that was signed in 2016, and came into force in late 2017.[25]

According to official evaluations on the both sides, there is still a huge potential to deepen Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation on combined transportation across the Black Sea. Ukraine has long been interested in Turkey's participation in the Viking Train project. The project is already expanded with the participation of Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Georgia. According to Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry, the above-mentioned combined transportation agreement will be beneficial for third parties such as Middle Eastern and Central Asian countries, and will integrate East-West corridor with North-South corridor.[26]

An increase in Ukraine's interest in trans-Caspian connectivity coincided with the Ukrainian-Russian confrontation in 2014, and with the general increase in alternative Europe-Asia connection among regional states of the Black Sea, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Regional countries' interests in an alternative connection between Central Asia and Europe through the Caucasus have been

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23 Svitlana Synkovska, "Ukrainian-Chinese Trade with Agricultural Products: Time of Changes", *APK-Inform Agency*, July 8, 2017, accessed March 7, 2018, https://www.apk-inform.com/en/exclusive/topic/1084150#.Wr3NvZPFL3A.

24 "China Becomes a Key Trade Partner, Investor in Ukraine", *Kyiv Post*, January 12 , 2018, accessed March 12, 2018, https://www.kyivpost.com/business/china-becomes-key-trade-partner-investor-ukraine.html.

25 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti İle Ukrayna Bakanlar Kurulu Arasında Uluslararası Kombine Yük Taşımacılığı Anlaşmasının Onaylanmasının Uygun Bulunduğuna Dair Kanun," *Resmî Gazete*, Sayı 30237, November 11, 2017, accessed March 24, 2018, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/11/20171111-11.htm.

26 TBMM, "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ve Ukrayna Bakanlar Kurulu Arasında Uluslararası Kombine Yük Taşımacılığına Dair Kanun Tasarısı ve Gerekçesi," February 16, 2017, accessed January 20, 2018, http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/1/1-0826.pdf.

experiencing a boost ever since the launch of the BRI. Since then, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan national railway companies have had regular meetings in order to develop multi-modal connectivity through the Caucasus. In February 2014, a Coordination Committee of Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) was established, and in February 2017, TITR became an international association.[27] TITR participants claim that it is the fastest way to transport goods from China to Europe. It was expected that by the end of 2017, the total amount of traffic through the route would reach 1,3 million tons. According to TITR Association's evaluations, the amount of freight will increase at least to three million tons in 2018.[28]

The importance of alternative connection to Asia emerged as an important issue for Ukraine after the country experienced major crises with Russia in 2014. In 2016 Russia tried to prevent the direct transit of Ukrainian goods through its territory, allowing the transit only through Belarus. As a result in 2016, Ukrainian exports to Central Asian countries decreased by 40%.[29] The decree that bans the transit of Ukrainian goods to Central Asia through Russia directly from Ukrainian territory was extended for another six-months period in 2018.[30]

Similarly, Turkish importers urgently needed an alternative connection to Central Asia after Russian attempts to disrupt traffic of Turkish goods directed to Central Asia. As a retaliation of Turkish downing of a Russian jet that violated Turkish border in November 2015, Russia initiated an all-out trade and propaganda "war" against Turkey, not only banning Turkish agricultural import, but also trying to prevent the transit passage of Turkish trucks going to Central Asia. At that time, Azerbaijan responded by introducing favorable transit fees and other procedural simplifications for Turkish transit in order to create an alternative lifeline for Turkish exports heading to Central Asia.[31]

The logic behind the rush towards new connectivity links is as much economic as it is political although recent Crimean and jet crises has strengthened the so-called "geopolitical" meaning of connectivity for Ukraine and Turkey. The post-Soviet disconnected geography, where neighboring economic regions do not have any major transportation infrastructure between themselves, was created during the Soviet time. Nevertheless, this situation explicitly demonstrates that even after the

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27 Trains-Caspian International Transport Route, "History of Company," 2018, accessed March 2, 2018, http://titr.kz/en/about-the-association/history-en.

28 "Volume of Goods Transit via Trans-Caspian Int'l Transit Route Revealed", *Trend News Agency*, November 15, 2017, accessed April 1, 2018, https://en.trend.az/business/economy/2821199.html.

29 Veronika Melkozerova, "As Russia Blocks Ukraine's Trade Corridors, Trade Shifts to Silk Road", *Kyiv Post*, May 11, 2017, accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.kyivpost.com/business/russia-blocks-ukraines-trade-corridors-focus-shifts-finding-modern-silk-road-routes.html.

30 "Russia Extends Ban Restricting Transit of Goods from Ukraine to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan", *Lb.ua*, January 4, 2018, accessed March 10, 2018, https://en.lb.ua/news/2018/01/04/5270_russia_extends_ban_restricting.html.

31 Azad Garibov, "The Trans-Caspian Corridor: Geopolitics of Transportation in Central Eurasia,", *Caucasus International* 6, no.1 (Summer 2016): 81.

25 years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, post-Soviet world still exists by the preservation of Russia as the single entity that connects Central Asia not only with the world, but also with the other parts of this post-Soviet geography.

One can say that Russian approach to use its position of the main transit country between Europe and Asia as a foreign policy leverage, increased regional countries' interest in the Trans-Caspian route. Within days after the restriction was imposed on Ukrainian goods heading for Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine managed to find a solution. On 14th January 2016 the countries signed a protocol to lower transportation tariffs along the trans-Caspian route and on the following day the first cargo train was dispatched from Kyiv. The cargo reached Chinese border in 12 days.[32] Due to an under-developed state of trans-Caspian connection, high costs, and the absence of Chinese companies' interest to transport their goods through the new route, the test did not bring immediate success.[33] Nevertheless, in the face of the Russian sanctions against Ukraine, Kazakhstan suggested Ukraine to redirect its exports towards the trans-Caspian route between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.[34] As it is seen from this case, Russian approach to prevent not only importation of goods to its own territory, but also transition towards Central Asian destination were met with concerns by partners of Russia in the Eurasian Economic Union, particularly by Kazakhstan. The unilateral manner of the above-mentioned restrictions that were bounded to have an impact on EEU's Central Asian members, revealed uncertainties of relying solely on one Europe-Asia connection.

Even if TITR participants consider it as a project in harmony with the BRI, in reality, today China prefers the old northern route, crossing through Russia, and the new northern route, running through Kazakhstan and Russia. The amount of freight transported through Kazakhstan from China to Europe and to the opposite direction is on a steady rise, increasing two-fold a year since 2015. In 2017 201,000 TEU was transported through Kazakhstan to these directions.[35] In total, the rise of freight transported by railroads between China and Europe is mainly due to the increase of transportation through Russia and Kazakhstan.

Despite the fact that there are still uncertainties about the Middle Corridor, multiple

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32 Lidiya Parkhmochik, "Does the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route Bring New Opportunities for Ukraine?", *Eurasian Research Institute*, May 22, 2016, accessed November 25, 2017, http://eurasian-research.org/en/research/comments/transport/does-trans-caspian-international-transport-route-bring-new-opportunities.

33 Maria Lagutina, "Improving Relations with Russia and Ukraine", in *China's Belt and Road: A Game Changer?*, ed. Alessia Ameghini, (Milano: ISPI, 2017),71; Veronika Melkozerova, "As Russia Blocks Ukraine's Trade Corridors, Trade Shifts to Silk Road"….

34 Ministry for Investment and Development, Republic of Kazakhstan, accessed on 10 December 2017, http://mid.gov.kz/ru/news/mir-rk-rekomenduet-s-1-iyulya-2016-goda-perevozchikam-osushchestvlyayushchim-mezhdunarodnye.

35 Ministry for Investment and Development, Republic of Kazakhstan, "QR İDM 2017 Jyldyn Qorytyndysyn Shygaryp, 2018 Jyldyn Mindetterin Belgiledi," February 14, 2018, accessed March 5, 2018, http://www.mid.gov.kz/en/node/27018.

cooperation frameworks were put into action by regional countries in order to develop this route. Among these frameworks, bilateral, regional and interregional dimensions can be identified. Particularly interesting is an embracement of BTK by GUAM countries as an effective way to sustain East-West connectivity. During the BTK International Conference held in Baku in 2014, GUAM countries expressed their support for BTK and their desire to develop Silk Road connections in general.[36] Following a less active period, GUAM members expressed their desire to concentrate on economic and transportation cooperation, particularly on the development of the GUAM Transport Corridor in 2017.[37] In general, the trans-Caspian connectivity is among the priorities of such frameworks as Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey trilateral cooperation, GUAM, and the Turkic Council. Newly established TITR provided a platform for cooperation between Caucasian countries, Central Asia countries, Turkey and Ukraine.

Conclusion

Advancing trans-Caspian connectivity is an important area of cooperation for Turkey and Ukraine despite the fact that they are in a position of competitors for the second link in this chain. Whatever the second link will be, the development of trade between Asia and Europe through Central Asia and the Caucasus has a potential to integrate these regions to the world economy, and endorse their independence. Turkey and Ukraine seem eager to re-shape artificially created post-Soviet geography, and integrate the Caucasus and Central Asia with the world.

Ukraine and Turkey displayed similar reaction to the Chinese ambitious BRI, a part of which is aimed to develop new transit corridors between Asia and Europe. In the West there is a widespread criticism of this project as an attempt to exert political influence and to alter American-dominated world order. The case of Turkey and Ukraine's participation in the BRI present an opportunity to observe the motivations of participant countries of different segments, particularly those outside of an imagined West and Europe. While today Turkey and Ukraine are moving in opposite directions regarding European integration, both are interested in taking part in the Chinese project. In dealing with the threat posed by Russia, the US and the EU appear as the strategic partners of Ukraine, and in dealing with the security challenges in the Middle East, Russia became an important partner for Turkey. But in today's world, countries with different strategic priorities and strategic partners still have a room for close cooperation. In this case, overlapping

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36 GUAM, "Joint Declaration of the International Conference on 'Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Link- New Opportunities in the Development of Silk Road'," October 16, 2014, accessed March 15, 2018, https://guam-organization.org/en/joint-declaration-of-the-international-conference-on-baku-tbilisi-kars-railway-link-new-opportunities-in-the-development-of-silk-road/.

37 GUAM, "Joint Statement by the Heads of Government of the GUAM Member States," March 27, 2017, accessed March 2, 2018, https://guam-organization.org/en/joint-statement-by-the-heads-of-government-of-the-guam-member-states/.

regional and interregional cooperation frameworks support bilateral cooperation between Turkey and Ukraine.

Economic and political interests of Turkey and Ukraine determine their transportation policies. Turkey and Ukraine have common interests in the Caucasus. Both of them prefer the current political map of the Eurasian region. Today, the importance of middle and regional powers has come to the fore. Countries everywhere struggle to find their place in a volatile and imbalanced world. The idea of connecting different regions in Eurasian continent does not belong to China alone, but exists in the interests of regional countries with or without political ambitions in Central Asia. These countries' approach is a logical consequence of their long-standing desire to benefit from their geographical position between imagined Europe and Asia, and develop new ties between their own and adjacent regions.

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THE BLACK SEA SECURITY AFTER 2013: IN A SEARCH OF A BRAND NEW STATUS QUO

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Introduction

The Black Sea security space appeared to be on top of the Trans-Atlantic concerns at least since February-March 2014. The reason was not just because of a threat to the global and regional security which revealed itself with the Russian invasion of Ukraine was compatible to the outcomes of the Syria crisis or other Middle East's challenges. Indeed, unlike the Syria crisis, where the US and Russia at least until recently have been seen rather as passive partners than enemies, the annexation of Crimea did initiate the sharpest crisis between "West" and "East" since the end of 1980s. The post-bipolar systems of global and regional security appeared to be ineffective to respond such hybrid case of invasion, neither by military nor by diplomatic means and measures. This fact requires a profound resetting of the whole system of global and regional security architecture taking into account a military threat coming from Russia's conventional forces and potentially even from the nuclear armament the UN, OSCE, or even NATO cannot handle. Contradictions because of the aggressive policy of Russia vis-à-vis Ukraine between NATO, the USA and their NATO allies on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other, brought us back to the times of the Cold War when both sides were treating each other as potential military threats and aiming to eliminate at the same time, if not clear "enemies;" and the tendency was rather pessimistic taking constant Russian spreading aggressiveness and continued sanctions against Putin's regime into account. In this context, it is important to stress out the words of the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on December 7, 2017 in front of Russian Foreign Minister at OSCE meeting in Vienna, "We will never accept Russia's occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea."[1] There is a special need to point out a conceptual vision of Russia's temporal occupation of Crimea as the "attempted annexation" which has not come to an end at least in a normative sense and there is a clear call that the US and their allies will tolerate it neither now nor in the future for many reasons. That means that the clash of interests, strategies, positions, intentions between "West" and "East" because of Ukraine will not come to an end in the foreseeable future. Anyway, when coming back to the Black Sea security, this attempted annexation of Crimea was partly (to our mind misleadingly) justified by the Russian President Putin when introducing NATO as a direct threat and motivation to act as it was a new Cold War taking place.

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1   OSCE, "US Department of State. 2017. *Remarks Rex W. Tillerson Secretary of State*, December 7, 2017, accessed July 7, 2018. https://www.state.gov/secretary/20172018tillerson/remarks/2017/12/276319.htm

NATO-Russian Clash over Ukraine: Implications on the Black Sea Insecurity

Just to remind one of the explanations directly related to the Black Sea security by President Putin on his motivation to turn Crimea "back home:" "If we don't do anything, Ukraine will be drawn into NATO sometime in the future. We'll be told: "This doesn't concern you," and NATO ships will dock in Sevastopol, the city of Russia's naval glory… if NATO troops walk in, they will immediately deploy these forces there. Such a move would be geopolitically sensitive for us because, in this case, Russia would be practically ousted from the Black Sea area. We'd be left with just a small coastline of 450 or 600km, and that's it!"[2]

Such "explanation" by Russian President was clearly and exclusively aimed at the pro-Putin auditorium in Russia alongside with clear pro-Russian forces in Ukraine, because it was quite naïve to believe that Russia, especially after it became against Ukraine in 2014-2015, would be so submissive to give up Sevastopol and let NATO "walk in" without any resistance first on the political level. Who would imagine a situation, when Russia voluntarily gives up Crimea and Sevastopol silently giving a way to NATO countries navy to substitute Russians there? Moreover, NATO never gave a sign that the Black Sea Fleet would be replaced by a NATO fleet and denied this for many occasions.[3] For sure, that was not of the primary concern in the Kremlin, which is also not absolutely naive and well aware about what was real and what was not concerning Sevastopol as the main Russia's Black Sea Fleet navy base. A thesis, that "NATO ships will dock in Sevastopol…" looked like irrelevant and exercised just Russian hybrid virtuality. At the same time danger, which arises out of virtual but still real, has non-virtual, but concrete tangible, and thus aggressive risks. The world was reached by clear signal from the Russian Federation to be taken into consideration, first of all, by the Russian neighbors - the EU and NATO countries - which are appeared to be in the potential zones of clashes: Russia is ready to wage hybrid wars (both "hard" and "soft") and launch preemptive hybrid attacks against any country, which dared to express its security needs opposite to Russia's expectations. In this respect, Russia has cleverly used as a red herring a scarecrow of NATO to hide its real imperial needs towards "brother country" of Ukraine. Such concerns are quite acute for Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria which are under potential threat from the Russia Federation. Possible brutal scenarios as to the NATO neighboring members should not be underestimated, ignored, and must be taken into consideration all over the Black Sea region, due to the Russia's reaction in response to NATO's military shield on Russia's western borders. Just at the beginning of 2018 Russia has deployed its advanced guided nuclear-capable Iskander missiles systems

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2   "Transcript: Vladimir Putin's April 17 Q&A," *The Washington Post*, April 17, 2014, accessed January 28, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/transcript-vladimir-putins-april-17-qanda/2014/04/17/ff77b4a2-c635-11e3-8b9a-8e0977a24aeb_story.html.

3   Judy Dempsey, "NATO tests Ukraine's readiness to join," *The New York Times*, June 16, 2008, accessed July 7, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/16/world/europe/16iht-nato.4.13743215.html.

permanently in its exclave of Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea region with a range of up to 500 kilometers to threaten NATO. It is also very possible, that Iskander is also on its way to the Black Sea region.

Respectively and paradoxically, as it flows out from the acute Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation as of 25 December 2014, it is Russia (which aggressively attempted to annex part of the Ukrainian territory) that suspects of NATO in aggressive intentions and poses it among main external military risks for itself and is ready to act satisfactory by using its military power.[4] There are not only provocations with groups of Russian warplanes conducting large-scale maneuvers in international airspace against NATO member-countries all over the Black, Baltic and North seas and the Atlantic Ocean, but also strategic plans of Kremlin to consider Crimea as the bridgehead against NATO. For example, the 2016 Russian military exercises in Crimea repeated same tactical scenarios as in 2014-2015 involving the Crimean Opuk training area. The Caucasus-2016 exercises in September 2016 demonstrated a clear intention of the Russian Federation to deter any military attack in the area from the South Caucasus to Crimea. In general, there is an impression, that "Russia has taken an unprecedented decision to strengthen the defense of the recently seized Crimean peninsula", also by sending missile submarines to occupied Crimea. Not surprisingly, Russian presidential envoy to Crimea Oleg Belaventsev called it "an impregnable fortress" yet in February 2015,[5] primarily against NATO and its current strategy in the Black Sea region.

At the same time, this is NATO which stands for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and criticizes Russia for annexation. However, ironically, Russian President approved a previous Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation as of 2013 exactly one year before Russian masked troops invaded and occupied key Crimean locations while executing direct Kremlin's order. According to the Concept, Russia identified itself "as an integral and inseparable part of European civilization" and claimed to have a "common deep-rooted civilizational ties" with "the Euro-Atlantic states" in particularly.[6] Obviously, before 2014, Russia had a clear passion at least officially to personify itself with the West – this collective wealthy and attractive phenomenon of the "Euro-Atlantic states", which reflected a conceptual unity between liberal conglomerate of the democratic countries and values-oriented communities. However Russia had been had been treated in 2013 by NATO members as counterparts: a) in "building up a truly unified region without

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4   The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Nothern Irelands, "The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation. Approved by the President of the Russian Federation on December 25, 2014. No. Pr.-2976.," accessed July 7, 2018. https://rusemb.org.uk/press/2029.

5   "Полпред в Крыму объявил полуостров "неприступной крепостью" ("President's representative in Crimea proclaimed Crimean peninsula as "an impregnable fortress"), *TASS*, February 19, 2015, accessed February 1, 2018, http://tass.ru/politika/1779223.

6   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation," *(approved by president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on 12 February 2013),* February 18, 2013, accessed January 17, 2018,
http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/official_documents/-/asset_publisher/CptICkB6BZ29/content/id/122186.

dividing lines through developing genuine partnership relations between Russia, the European Union and the United States;" b) in "creating a common space of peace, security and stability based on the principles of indivisible security, equal cooperation and mutual trust;" and in c) "creating a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific."[7]

Russian Threat and NATO's Response

Just in four year time, but not by chance, in April 2017, the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine Hugues Mingarelli has said that Russia is seen as the main threat to the Black Sea region.[8] "The Black Sea is a springboard for Russia's efforts to extend its reach and influence far beyond its borders", distinguished US diplomat and former NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow told participants in his keynote speech addressing to the 95th Rose-Roth seminar of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly entitled "Towards a Secure and Stable Ukraine and Black Sea Region" which took place in Kyiv on 3-5 July 2017.[9] He noted that the Black Sea is in many ways the nexus of Russia's strategy aiming at re-establishing hegemony over its southern neighbourhood – a strategy based on disruption and destabilisation rather than mutually beneficial cooperation. Given the political, economic and human rights implications of Russia's destabilising policies, he stressed that all NATO allies were stakeholders in the security of the Black Sea. In the face of Russia's considerable military build-up, he suggested that NATO needed to consider a more persistent military presence in the region, especially when it came to maritime capabilities. According to Ambassador Vershbow, Russia deployed advanced air defences (such as the S-400) and coastal anti-ship defences, and turned Crimea into a bastion for Russian anti-access and area denial (A2AD) capabilities that provide Russia with the potential to impede the movement of regional forces and disrupt NATO efforts to reinforce Allies' defences. As Andrew Budd, Head of Defence Capabilities Section (Defence Policy and Capabilities Directorate) at NATO noted, Russia is moving modern weapons and military platforms to the region, creating a very effective A2AD "bubble" and challenging freedom of movement in the Black Sea area.[10] Do NATO and its allies in the EU ready to accept such challenges?

The answer was partly articulated during Warsaw 8-9 July 2016 NATO Summit. In order to keep balance of power with Russia and to be ready to "hike own" "outlays on protecting the airspace of Black Sea members" properly, NATO had to

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7   Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation"…

8   "EU considers Russia main threat to Black Sea region – envoy," *UNIAN*, April 24, 2017, accessed February 13, 2018. https://www.unian.info/politics/1891039-eu-considers-russia-main-threat-to-black-sea-region-envoy.html.

9   NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "95th Rose-Roth Seminar Report: Towards a Secure and Stable Ukraine and Black Sea Region," November 22, 2017, accessed February 4, 2018, https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2017-12/2017%20-KYIV%2095th%20ROSE%20ROTH%20REPORT%20-%20%20258%20SEM%2017%20%20E.pdf.

10   NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "95th Rose-Roth Seminar Report:…"

change its strategy in the Black Sea region. That "retaliatory step of placing more modern air defense systems and fighter aircraft in Romania, Bulgaria and other Black Sea countries" was on the agenda of the NATO Summit in Warsaw.[11] Key NATO's reflections on the changed military environment in the Black Sea region can be found in the Warsaw Summit Communiqué, as well as the Resolution on Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region which was adopted during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's annual session in Bucharest on October 6-9, 2017. In addition, throughout the NATO PA meeting which issued strong declarations of support for nations facing Russian intervention, it was broadly accepted that Moscow's interference in countries around the Black Sea was an issue of particular concern. "Supporting Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, is defending the whole of Europe and NATO as well," as Paolo Alli, the NATO PA president, admitted in October 2017.[12]

It was also stated in the Warsaw Summit Communiqué, that "Russia continues to strengthen its military posture, increases its military activities, deploys new high-end capabilities, and challenge regional security." Thus, NATO informed that "[they] will also develop tailored forward presence in the southeast part of the Alliance territory" and assess "options for a strengthened NATO air and maritime presence."[13] One of these options was assessed without a delay. During the Warsaw NATO Summit, allies declared Initial Operational Capability of NATO Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD), which has been seen as a capability to defend Alliance populations, territory, and forces across southern Europe against a potential ballistic missile attack, including the most dangerous Russian Iskander units. These include the Aegis Ashore site in Deveselu, Romania NATO, the forward-based early-warning BMD radar at Kürecik, Turkey and an Aegis Ashore site at the Redzikowo military base in Poland.[14] Will it be fully enough to deter Russia and counterbalance its far-going military intentions in the Black Sea region? The answer must be negative, but such BMD strategy in the Black Sea area is already an alarming signal for Russia. According to Alexander Khramchikhin, director of the Institute of Political and Military Analysis, the key threat of the US missile defense system in Eastern Europe to Russia is the ability to instantly convert a missile defense base into an offensive one,[15] which should be taken uniquely into global consideration by all sides.

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11 NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué: issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw," NATO Press Release (2016) 100, July 9, 2016, accessed February 3, 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

12 NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "NATO PA backs resolute response to security challenges on eastern and southern borders," October 9, 2017, accessed February 13, 2018, https://www.nato-pa.int/news/nato-pa-backs-resolute-response-security-challenges-eastern-and-southern-borders.

13 NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué: issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw"…

14 NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communiqué: issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw"…

15 Nikolai Litovkin, "Russia to open new naval base in Black Sea to counter NATO", *Russia Beyond*, June 29, 2016, accessed February 4, 2018, http://rbth.com/defence/2016/06/29/russia-to-open-new-naval-base-in-black-sea-to-counter-nato_607229.

At the same time, the future of the Black Sea security also depends on the on-going navy competition in the Black Sea. As Ambassador Vershbow noted during the already mentioned Kyiv Rose-Roth seminar of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, despite these positive steps, there are still some significant gaps in NATO's deterrence posture in Europe – including gaps in maritime presence and insufficient air and theatre missile defence. He suggested that NATO should consider a more persistent military presence in the Black Sea region, especially when it comes to maritime capabilities, fully in compliance with the Montreux Convention.[16] NATO has confirmed its strategic intentions "to use all available political and diplomatic means to seek deescalation of tensions in the Black Sea region, and to support regional efforts to turn into an area of dialogue and cooperation" later in the NATO Bucharest Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 437 on Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region on Monday 9 October 2017.[17]

Obviously, the USA cannot stay away from such developments for many reasons among which is the fact that it touches upon nuclear security. Russia itself has securitized the American factor to introduce it into regional discourse Since it has been blaming the US for "Ukraine crisis" from the very beginning. In the documentary, which marked a year since the referendum considering Russia having taken the control of Crimea, "Mr. Putin described the Ukrainian revolution to oust Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014 as an armed coup 'masterminded by our American friends' with the readiness to use nuclear weapons 'if necessary'."[18] Such trend is just a prolonging strategy to build in Crimea not just a conventional "Russian impregnable fortress," but the nuclear one. This kind of a risk could give it a crucial head start in the event of a global conflict. As Mikhail Ulyanov, the head of the Foreign Ministry's non-proliferation department, said in March 2015 "Russia can deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea as the peninsula is part of its territory."[19]

Intraregional Factors of Stabilization and Russian Track

Meanwhile, we are witnessing a new regional arm race trend which is initiating global confrontation. This is an alarming situation, as regional scenario is developing in a very frame of the neo-realism school of international relations which is based on the egoïstic interests of a state, defending national interests in

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16   NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "95th Rose-Roth Seminar Report:…"

17   NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Resolution 437 on Stability and Security in the Black Sea Region, 219 CDS 17 E rev. 2 fin. Presented by the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Monday 9 October 2017, Bucharest, Romania," accessed February 4, 2018. https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2017-10/2017%20-%20RESOLUTION%20437%20-%20BLACK%20SEA%20-%20SCHMIDT%20%20-%20%20219%20CDS%2017%20E.pdf.

18   Adam Withnall, "Vladimir Putin says Russia was Preparing to Use Nuclear Weapons 'If Necessary' and Blames US for Ukraine Crisis", *Independent,* March, 16 2015, accessed January 27, 2018.
http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-putin-says-russia-was-preparing-to-use-nuclear-weapons-if-necessary-and-blames-us-for-10109615.html.

19   "Deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Crimea possible – Foreign Ministry,*" TASS*, March, 11 2015, accessed February 11, 2018, http://tass.ru/en/russia/782071.

general, and thus providing balance of power. Since early 2014, this balance of power which did exist in more or less balanced way primarily between Russia, Turkey, NATO, EU, and USA seized to exist. Having this "case of Crimea after 2013" and aggressive policy of Russia towards nuclear objects in Crimea which Ukraine concerns Ukrainian despite the actual fact of annexation, one should also not underestimate the threat of the on-going nuclear rivalry in the Black Sea region. A Russian trend towards nuclearization of Crimea particularly near Feodosia is in the very focus.

In this respect, despite the fact that even now "Turkey remains caught between its desire to pursue regional ambitions, its NATO commitments, and the necessity to accommodate to Russia,"[20] it is important to outline NATO-Turkish strategic perspective when talking about future military competition in the region. Thus, even without taking into account a coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016 and a current stage of "warmer" relations with Russia, the Turkish foreign policy seems to be slowly, but returning back to the original Euro-Atlantic track to "tighten Turkish bonds with NATO" despite unstable relations with the US recently.[21] When reacting to violations of Turkish sovereign airspace in October 2015 by Russian side, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan recalled Article V of the Washington Treaty saying that "an attack on Turkey means an attack on NATO," which was not accidental.[22] Ankara, in the words of Turkish Prime Minister of that time Ahmet Davutoglu, clearly showed its readiness to respond to any threat no matter from what side it was coming. "The Turkish armed forces are clearly instructed. Even if it is a flying bird, it will be intercepted," Davutoglu said on 7 October 2015.[23] NATO backed Turkey vis-à-vis Russia. As NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg hastened to assure, NATO is ready to defend Turkey – including sending in troops "if needed… NATO is ready and able to defend all allies, including Turkey against any threats," Mr. Stoltenberg said."[24]

Objectively, for tactical reasons one should not also write off the already mentioned Montreux Convention, which is in the interests of Russia (and Turkey) as it has been since 1936 despite the enjoyable rights Montreux Convetion have been delivering to Kremlin, it also imposes certain duties on Russia to respect international law and Convention itself). At the same time, it may be supplementary

20 Boris Toucas. "Turkey Has No Allies in the Black Sea, Only Interests." *CSIS,* February 13, 2018, accessed July 7, 2018. https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkey-has-no-allies-black-sea-only-interests.

21 Awad Mustafa and Burak Ege Bekdil, "Russian Actions Tighten Turkish Bonds with NATO, Qatar," *Defense News*, October 11, 2015, accessed February 4, 2018. http://www.defensenews.com/story/defense/policy-budget/2015/10/11/russian-actions-turkish-bonds-with-nato-qatar/73665990/.

22 Awad Mustafa and Burak Ege Bekdil, "Russian Actions Tighten Turkish Bonds with NATO, Qatar,"…

23 "NATO Warns Russia after Jet Strays into Turkey," *Al Jazeera*, October, 6 2015, accessed February 7, 2018. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/10/nato-warns-russia-jet-strays-turkey-151005155403930.html.

24 Victoria Richards, "Nato 'Ready to Send Troops into Turkey' Following Russian Violation of Airspace," *Independent*, October 12, 2015, accessed February 1, 2018, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/nato-is-ready-to-send-troops-into-turkey-a6685576.html.

to Russia's naval strategy against Ukraine and Georgia, but when touching upon naval confrontation against other Black Sea littoral states all of which are NATO members, it immediately causes a sub-regional trouble turning NATO members into regional and even global challenge for the NATO itself, the USA and the EU. In this respect, Montreux Convention even inside the Black Sea region could give fewer benefits for Russia's current domination in the North-East part of the Black Sea in case additional battle ships are donated from the side of other NATO-countries to the flags of Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. Montreux Convention as a comfortable instrument of the Russian sub-regional conventional policy inside the Black Sea may almost totally lose its defensive effect from the outsiders once potential military conflict expanded outside the Black Sea area. If Turkey as a NATO country is involved, Russian Black Sea Fleet appears to be closed inside the sea without permission to pass through Bosphorus and further into the Aegean sea. At the same time, it appears to be a military target for the NATO striking forces located in Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and with US 6th Fleet. Having latest decisions in the Warsaw 2016 NATO Summit and NATO BMD perspectives in the Black Sea region and in Poland, probably the most powerful in the Black Sea Russian Black Sea Fleet now and Russian sea-side appears to be fragile at the end. Naturally, Russia has enough capacities like atomic submarines to respond from outside of the Black Sea. It makes potential sub-regional conflict as the interregional and even global one.

In general, as independent Moscow-based defence analyst Pavel Felgenhauer argued that Russia's policy vis-à-vis the Black Sea is best explained through a military lens: Moscow believes it is under attack by NATO and it needs restoring balance and counter NATO ally Turkey's control of the Bosporus Straits as well as NATO's missile defence installations in Romania by occupying Crimea and deploying capabilities such as Iskander missiles, which are capable of reaching NATO assets in Romania. He noted that militarisation of the Black Sea is part of a broader Russian strategy to build a chain of bases along its entire perimeter. According to Pavel Felgenhauer, Moscow does so to protect the natural resources that Russia's enemies will allegedly try to capture in the context of the upcoming global resource crunch.[25]

Effectiveness of the sub-regional cooperative initiatives, like BLACKSEAFOR, now is under question, with regard to Russia's official postponement of its participation in such projects. An Attempt to prevent Russian domination in the Black Sea with the Romanian initiative "to establish a multinational framework brigade" is also appeared to be empty. The US-led annual "See Breeze" military exercises as well as the Black Sea Harmony under the leadership of Turkey could strengthen NATO's presence, but one should not overestimate such efforts for the actual deterrence of Russia. Anyway, there is one essential observation on the

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25   NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "95th Rose-Roth Seminar Report:…"

surface. It appeared to be that conventional power of Turkish forces, including Navy, has nothing to do with the nuclear potential of Russia even in the regional coordinates.

That means the fact that self-isolation and refusal to keep cooperative efforts in making Black Sea safer actually makes further naval cooperation within regional security system in a common peaceful way impossible. At the same time, without Russian participation any successful realization of any naval operation with the common security interest fails to be achieved. All these inevitably involve all Black Sea littoral states not only into interregional confrontation, but also into a dialog and negotiations. The fact is that such negotiations are the subject of global affairs from the very beginning, rather than sub-regional. Despite the annexation and clear military threat, one should also not forget that Russia has broken bilateral "Big political" Agreement on friendship and cooperation with Ukraine as of May 31, 1997; as well as the Budapest Memorandum of 1994. Russia continues openly violate international law (maritime law and the law of sea in particularly), disrespects Ukrainian maritime economic zones, and repeatedly blocks Kerch strait and Azov Sea for the Ukrainian vessels. All these only complicates security dialog with Russia and makes future security scenarios in the Black Sea region unpredictable.

Conclusion

More or less stable before 2014, the Black Sea security system has been rapidly moving from the multilateral cooperative military mechanisms to the bipolar balance of power format. The main trend of such bipolarity – regional deterrence of Russia, which has strengthened its naval and other military capabilities in the Black Sea, including the annexed Crimea, as compared to the rest of the five Black Sea littoral states, three of which are members of NATO. Principal political and military confrontation in the Black Sea region touches upon not only non-NATO Black Sea littoral states - Ukraine and Georgia, but also Russia and NATO. Russia-NATO tensions emerging from Black Sea sub-regional bipolarity risk to bring military threats out from the sub-regional level to the global one is due to hard-security capabilities and needs of protection from them on the global level of international system. Due to specific nature of the crisis in the bilateral Russian-Turkish relations after the Su-24 incident in November, 2015 and despite a new period of friendship between Putin and Erdogan after its resolution in summer, 2016, the future Turkey's role in the region vis-à-vis Russia and other security challenges in the Black Sea region could be just supplementary to NATO's strategy. On the surface, there is one essential observation. It appeared to be that conventional power of Turkish forces, including Navy, has nothing to do with the nuclear potential of Russia even in the regional coordinates.

As far as this case touches upon theoretical framework of the center-power counterbalancing competition in the international system, there is a conclusion to

take, when a capacity for a non-nuclear power to be in a status of center-power is limited another actor with the ability to be in a status of center-power is a nuclear state. Following this, by strengthening its positions in Romania and Turkey with its new BMD, NATO is able only to preserve the new balance of regional power in order to escape a direct military clash with Russia in the sea, land and air. Involving two non-NATO Black Sea littoral states - Georgia and Ukraine - into any joint NATO naval projects to deter, Russia may appear counterproductive due to the risk of provoking Russian aggression against Kyiv and Tbilisi. Defending both of them by military means from the side of NATO is also not realistic. That minimizes NATO involvement into confrontation with Russia beyond the territorial waters of the Black Sea NATO member-countries. In general, as to the success of the deterrence mechanisms from the side of NATO inside the Black Sea even without symbolic participation of Georgia and Ukraine, things are not that inspiring: Russia simply achieved its maximum in its own interests in the Black Sea region since the annexation of Crimea. At this point, after Georgia and Ukraine, it is NATO which appeared to be Russia's next potential target. In this case, future military climate in the Black Sea region is inevitably dependent on the supra-system relations between West and Russia.

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A BRIDGE BETWEEN UKRAINE AND TURKEY: CRIMEAN TATAR DIASPORA

Fethi Kurtiy ŞAHİN

Introduction

Today, *Euromaidan* and the following 'Revolution of Dignity' are considered to be the most important incidents in the history of post-Soviet Ukraine. In addition, the more recent occupation of the Crimean Peninsula and the war in the Donbas Region have compelled Ukraine to re-shape its relationship with its citizens. Indeed, not only Ukrainian politics but also the country's relations with its neighbors changed deeply after 2014.

Ukraine's minorities and its indigenous peoples had a special place in this process. Their involvement in the Euromaidan protests, the pro-Ukrainian stance of the Crimean Tatar national movement came as no surprise to many specialists, and their support for Ukraine, their willingness to participate in the reform process, and their support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine initiated a new era in the relations between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. This transformation created massive impact outside the borders of Ukraine, and triggered another transformation among the Crimean Tatar diaspora, which had a significant international dimension. In this article, I will concentrate on the change in the relations between the Crimean Tatar diaspora and Ukraine, the effects of this change in the general character of the Crimean Tatar national movement, and its reflections on the relations between Ukraine and Turkey. This work does not aim to list the activities of the Crimean Tatar diaspora; instead, it presents an analysis of the methods and changes in the diaspora.

A Brief Literature Review on Crimean Tatar Diaspora

Crimean Tatar diaspora is remarkable as regards its methodology, relations with homeland, and participatory nature. Some sources are important for researchers interested in this case. To better understand the emergence of the Crimean Tatar diaspora and the story of the migration of Crimean Tatars out of their homeland, one should read *Türkiye'deki Kırım Tatar ve Nogay Köy Yerleşimleri,* written by Hakan Kırımlı.[1] Filiz Tutku Aydın's "Comparative Cases in Long-Distance Nationalism: Explaining the Émigré, Exile, Diaspora and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars" is another scientific study on the nationalism

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1   Hakan Kırımlı, *Türkiye'deki Kırım Tatar ve Nogay Köy Yerleşimleri* (Ankara: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2012).

and identity issues in the diaspora, offering a comprehensive coverage of the methods of diaspora institutions and perceptions of diaspora activists.[2] Cafer Seydahmet Kırımer's *Bâzı Hâtıralar* is an another significant book for the history of the diaspora. It is remarkable for two reasons: first, Kırımer who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of the 1917 Kurultai, migrated to Turkey after the Bolshevik occupation in the peninsula. He is the one who brought the principles and arguments of the Kurultai to Turkey; second, as a person who was active in the homeland and the diaspora, his comments were critical to a well-founded understanding of the Crimean Tatar activism in general.[3] Müstecip Ülküsal's *Kırım Yolunda Bir Ömür: Hatıralar*, *Kırım Türk-Tatarları: Dünü-Bugünü-Yarını,* and *Dobruca'dan* are also important books related to the Crimean Tatar history and the diaspora specifically.[4]

Speaking about Ülküsal, it is also worth mentioning the *Emel* Journal.[5] It started to be published in Romania in 1930s by Müstecip Ülküsal, who then moved to Turkey in 1960s. *Emel* is the journal that voiced the arguments of the Crimean Tatar diaspora during the Cold War and it has always been described as a school that produced generations of the movement by the leadership of the diaspora. There are other periodicals published in the diaspora, yet they are far from being a flagship for a movement. Still, *Kırım Bülten* (published by HQ of Crimean Association in Ankara), *Bahçesaray* (published by Crimean Association's İstanbul Branch), and *Kalgay* (published by Crimean Association's Bursa Branch) journals shed light onto the phenomenon as they all recorded the activities of the Crimean Tatar diaspora associations in Turkey. In addition to these, Turkish page of the Crimean News Agency (QHA) offers important information related to the Crimean Tatar diaspora.[6] Lastly, official web pages of the diaspora associations are important sources for researchers.

Kurultai and Mejlis (*Qurultay* and *Meclis*)

The Crimean Tatars that had remained on the Crimean Peninsula were deported from their homeland in 1944 and were isolated in the Soviet Union for many years, much like the Chechens, Ingushs, and Ahıska Turks, among other nationalities. Soviet policies made it almost impossible for the Crimean Tatar diaspora to contact their co-ethnics living in the Soviet Union until 1991. Starting in the late 1960s,

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2   Filiz Tutku Aydın, "Comparative Cases in Long-Distance Nationalism: Explaining the *Émigré*, Exile, Diaspora and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars" (PhD. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2012).

3   Cafer Seydahmet Kırımer, *Bâzı Hâtıralar*, (İstanbul: Emel Türk Kültürünü Araştırma ve Tanıtma Vakfı, 1993).

4   Müstecip Ülküsal, *Kırım Yolunda Bir Ömür: Hatıralar* (Ankara: Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Merkezi, 1999); Müstecip Ülküsal, *Kırım Türk-Tatarları: Dünü-Bugünü-Yarını* (Baha Matbaası, 1980).

5   *Emel* journal is now being published by *Emel Türk Kültürünü Araştırma ve Tanıtma Vakfı*. Archive of the journal is available online in the webpage of the foundation at http://www.emelvakfi.org/.

6   For QHA's official website visit http://qha.com.ua/tr.

Crimean Tatars, in the lands to which they had been deported, launched a mass movement to return to their homeland, which would be possible by the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Today, Crimean Tatars do not own their states. However, upon returning to the Crimean Peninsula after their deportation in the last days of the Soviet Union, Crimean Tatars pursued *sui generis* methods. Their self-governmental and democratic institutions – Kurultai (in Crimean Tatar: *Qurultay*; in Turkish: *Kurultay*) and Mejlis (*Meclis*) are very significant examples for social science literature. Kurultai functions like a parliament taking decisions on behalf of the Crimean Tatars, and the Mejlis acts like a government executing the decisions of the Kurultai.

Crimean Tatar Diaspora and Its Relations with Crimea

Today, the largest Crimean Tatar diaspora population lives in Turkey. Crimean Tatars started migrating to Ottoman lands in the late-18th century after the Russian Empire annexed the peninsula in 1783. In the period following the annexation, the policies enacted by the Russian Empire and the drastic differences in the property rights granted to Muslims and Christians resulted in mass migration to Ottoman lands, predominantly in 1812, 1828–1829, 1860–1861, 1874, 1890 and 1902.[7] According to figures compiled by Kemal Karpat, almost 1.8 million Crimean emigres were living in Anatolia at the time of the establishment of the Turkish Republic.[8] The population projections made based on this statistic point to an estimated 3 to 5 million Crimea Tatars living in Turkey today.

Although it is not possible to tell exactly the size of this diaspora group, considering also that the diaspora communities tend to exaggerate their numbers, their activism in civil society in Turkey is worth mentioning. In fact, there are more than 50 active associations and foundations among the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey. The Crimean Association (*Kırım Derneği* / *Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği*), which has 25 branches in Turkey, as well as offices in Turkey, Romania, Poland, and Ukraine, was recognized as an association for the public weal by a decision of the Turkish government in December 21, 1992.[9] The number of offices operated by these Crimean Tatar diaspora institutions, as well as their social activities, increased markedly especially after the 1980s. Prior to that, the leadership of the diaspora had been concentrated in intellectual and close-group projects, but in the 1980s, changes were made in how

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7   Hakan Kırımlı, "Rus Idaresi Donemi" (in "Kırım"), *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Turk Diyanet Vakfı, 2002) Vol.25, 458.

8   Kemal Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison-Wisconsin, 1985), 66 cited in Hakan Kırımlı, *Kırım Tatarlarında Milli Kimlik ve Milli Hareketler (1904-1916)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010), 12.

9   For *Kırım Derneği*'s official website visit http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/.

they worked and pursued their activism. To establish direct contact with every Crimean Tatar population center, including neighborhoods of villages, the organizations aimed to become stronger in the field. Today, the diaspora associations and foundations concentrate mostly on cultural activities in Turkey such as language courses, music and dance training groups, harvest and spring festivals in the villages, and tours of folk dance and music ensembles.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain, Crimean Tatar diaspora activists and the Crimean Tatar activists in Crimea reestablished ties, and the relations of the diaspora with their homeland in Crimea were fostered, intensifying their activism. Today, the Crimean Tatar diaspora recognizes the Kurultai and the Mejlis as representatives of all Crimean Tatar people, and abides by their decisions. Diaspora organizations have actively worked to keep their connections with Kurultai and Mejlis and targeted to attract the attention of the public to support these institutions since the early 1990s. This political action can be accepted as the start of the bridging role of the Crimean Tatar diaspora between Turkey and Ukraine. Since then, Crimean Tatar diaspora institutions have gradually increased such activities.

Political standpoint of Turkey on the Crimean Tatar issue is important to underline. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Turkey has always supported the Crimean Tatars in both Crimea and Turkey, which was manifested by Süleyman Demirel's parliamentary speech as the president of Turkey in 1994, and his promises of official aid during his official visit to Ukraine, his visit to Crimea in 1998.[10] This attitude of Turkey pave the way of the diaspora institutions for more extensive and effective projects. Since return of Crimean Tatars to Crimea, the Turkish authorities have constantly stressed the importance of the well-being of Crimean Tatars for relations between Ukraine and Turkey. To this end, Crimean Tatar leaders Mustafa Jemilev and Refat Chubarov make regular visits to Turkey, and Turkey provides political and financial support to Crimean Tatar institutions in the diaspora and in Crimea. Turkey did not change its stance after the Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.[11] In the earliest days of the occupation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu gathered the representatives of the Crimean Tatar diaspora, and pledged the support of the Government of Turkey.[12] In this meeting, their willingness to protect the rights of Crimean Tatars was emphasized again, and the Crimean Tatar diaspora was invited to keep communication channels open. Turkey did not recognize the Russian annexation and voiced its support to the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

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10 "Kırım'a tarihi ziyaret," *Hürriyet*, May 05, 1988, accessed December 7, 2017, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kirima-tarihi-ziyaret-39020070; "Kırım, bir dostunu, 9. Cumhurbaşkanı Süleyman Demirel'i kaybetti," *QHA*, June 17, 2015, accessed December 7, 2017, http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/kirim-bir-dostunu-9-cumhurbaskani-suleyman-demirel-i-kaybetti/138059/.

11 "Çavuşoğlu ve Litvanyalı mevkidaşından "Kırım" açıklaması," *QHA*, August 22, 2016, accessed December 7, 2017, http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/cavusoglu-ve-litvanyali-mevkidasindan-quot-kirim-quot-aciklamasi/148301/.

12 "Dışişleri Bakanı Davutoğlu Kırım Dernekleri Temsilcileri'ni kabul etti," Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı, accessed February 2, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-davutoglu-kirim-dernekleri-temsilcileri_ni-kabul-etti.tr.mfa.

Relations between Crimean Tatar Diaspora and Ukraine

Before 2014

It is important to note that, prior to 2014, the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey had worked on strengthening ties only with Crimea, and particularly with the Mejlis and the Kurultai. For the diaspora, Ukraine was no more than a state in which Crimea was located for long years. Establishing and improving relations with Ukraine was not a priority for the diaspora, as all the power of the diaspora was mobilized in to support of the Crimean Tatar self-governmental institutions and to deal with the basic problems of the returnee Crimean Tatars. Diaspora associations placed themselves in a subordinate position in their relations with the Mejlis and the Kurultai, and this principle was never questioned by the diaspora, which is why the decisions of these institutions created the theoretical framework for activism among the diaspora. Since the Crimean Tatars' return movement to Crimea -*Avdet*- started, the Kurultai and Mejlis called upon the Ukrainian authorities to restore the indigenous rights of Crimean Tatars and rehabilitate the Crimean Tatar culture to compensate for the damages and losses caused by the 1944 deportation. Furthermore, the Crimean Peninsula was a region where the international disputes between Ukraine and Russia had never been resolved.[13] The security concerns of Ukraine related to the Peninsula, and the demands of the Crimean Tatar movement created many frictions in the relations between among all parties.

However, the Crimean Tatar diaspora institutions were not used to working together, except for organization work related directly to Crimea, the Mejlis, and the Kurultai. Internal political debates and disputes related to projects were common in the past, and as a result, the diaspora's collaboration with the Mejlis and the Kurultai was also disunited and rendered ineffective in many regards. The confrontational character of the relations between the Crimean Tatar institutions and Ukraine inhibited the development of relations into a collaboration. Additionally, the nature of the relations between diaspora and the Crimean Tatar self-governmental institutions pacified the Crimean Tatar diaspora in its relations with the Ukrainian institutions. This trend can be traced in the activity reports of the associations.[14]

Considering the stance of Turkey on the Crimean issue, the arguments of Crimean Tatar movement and their relations with Ukraine occupied a critical place in the relations between Ukraine and Turkey. However, it can be argued that they have been unable to mobilize their social potential to contribute to these relations, which would also strengthen their own movement. In 2014, however, the Crimean Tatar diaspora underwent a change and re-positioned itself in regional politics.

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13   See, Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007).

14   For the activity reports of the Crimean Association, see; "Faaliyet Raporları," Kırım Derneği, http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/dernek/faaliyet-raporlar. Organizations related to Ukraine and Ukrainians were too few, and the language used to refer to Ukraine and Ukrainians were different from todays.

After 2014

The first, and maybe the most important, change after 2014 was the rise of activism in the Crimean Tatar diaspora, which was a result of the growing sorrow, despair, and anger among the diaspora members. This reaction was readily apparent in social media. Nevertheless, the leaders of the diaspora organizations did not allow these feelings to cause a chaos among the associations. Instead, to increase solidarity in the diaspora against the Russian occupation, a *de facto* umbrella organization was established with the name 'the Platform of Crimean Tatar Organizations in Turkey' in February 8, 2015.[15] This *de facto* platform was the first institution to unite the majority of the Crimean Tatar diaspora. Participation in this platform was allowed on one condition: that the Kurultai and the Mejlis authorities be recognized as the highest representatives and decision-making institutions of the Crimean Tatars. The platform brought together 42 organizations in Turkey. A World Congress of Crimean Tatars was called by the diaspora platform, with NGOs in Turkey taking the responsibility for its organization.[16] During the meeting, maybe for the first time in Crimean Tatar history, the diaspora willingly took on significant responsibility in the political side of the movement, by establishing a trans-national institution defending the rights of the Crimean Tatar people in the international arena and backing the leaders of the Kurultai and the Mejlis. The occupation actually spurred unification of the diaspora organizations.

Following these incidents, the ban of the Mejlis,[17] which is recognized as a government by Crimean Tatars, forced the diaspora to become more active and to share the burden of the occupation. The board of the World Congress needed to deal with the problems that Mejlis could not handle under the occupational situation, such as voicing the oppression against the Crimean Tatar activists in the Crimean Peninsula, coordinating the diaspora activities and projects, education issues of the Crimean Tatar youth and so on. Consequently, the diaspora leadership had the chance to gain a better understanding of Ukrainian politics through projects with the deported leadership of the movement in Kyiv after the occupation. A direct line of communication was established between the diaspora and the Ukrainian authorities, and both sides gained an awareness of the mutual benefits of collaboration. Together with these fundamental changes in the Crimean Tatar international activism and intimacy between the diaspora and Ukraine, their mutual relations started to change. This change and the new dimensions of the relations between sides are noticeable in a series of examples.

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15   "Türkiye'de bulunan 42 Kırım Tatar teşkilatından tarihi karar," *Kırım Haber*, February 9, 2015, accessed December 2, 2017, http://www.vatankirim.net/kirimhaber/haber/haber_detay.asp?HaberID=102.

16   "Dünya Kırım Tatar Kongresi Ankara'da yapılacak," *QHA*, June 22, 2015, accessed December 2, 2017, http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/dunya-kirim-tatar-kongresi-ankara-da-yapilacak/138130/.

17   "Kırım Tatar Milli Meclisi'nin yeni merkezi Kiev," *Anadolu Ajansı*, April 28, 2016, accessed December 2, 2017, http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/kirim-tatar-milli-meclisinin-yeni-merkezi-kiev/563139.

One of the most striking changes is the representation of the Ukrainian symbols in the diaspora activities. Ukrainian flag is used together with the Crimean Tatar flag and Turkish flag, and the Ukrainian anthem is sung in the organizations having official representatives together with Turkish and Crimean Tatar anthems. Unlike the days before the occupation, when even the participation of Ukrainians in such organizations was not very common and the representation of Ukrainian symbols was almost like a taboo, today Crimean Tatar activists use these symbols voluntarily and invite Ukrainians to participate in all organizations to improve their solidarity. Involving the first act of valuing Ukrainian symbols, the 2015 World Congress of Crimean Tatars in Ankara was remarkable.[18] Flags of the representative countries were hung on two sides of the scene. However, the Ukrainian flag was right behind the dais by the Crimean Tatar flag. This was a breaking point in the diaspora history.

The second example was the celebration and commemoration activities of the 100th anniversary events of the First Kurultai of the Crimean Tatar People. This Kurultai has been the most important symbol of the Crimean Tatar political activism since the deportation of 1944, so the organizations devoted to this incident represent the Crimean Tatar national sentiments. Crimean Tatar diaspora activists organized a reception to commemorate the 100th anniversary in Ankara, and they hosted many diplomats, bureaucrats, journalists, and activists. This organization was commenced by the Crimean Tatar, Ukrainian, and Turkish National Anthems. Crimean Tatar Flag was placed between the Ukrainian and Turkish flags, and some Ukrainians diaspora members and Ukrainian diplomats among the participants were wearing their traditional costumes.

The special event held on December 6, 2017 in the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine was also indicative of the change process which started to influence the high politics.[19] Conducting a special session devoted to the 100th anniversary of the First Kurultai of the Crimean Tatar People in the main saloon of the parliament was historical for the relations between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. Crimean Tatar flag was positioned by the Ukrainian flag in the General Assembly, and Crimean Tatar national anthem was played at the opening and closure ceremonies of the organization. Former presidents of Ukraine, members of the cabinet, speaker of the parliament, and members of the parliament attended this session together with Crimean Tatar activists from Crimea, mainland Ukraine, and Crimean Tatar Diaspora in general. In this session, the vice president of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars and the president of the Crimean Association, Mükremin Şahin,

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18 "2. Dünya Kırım Tatar Kongresi başladı," *QHA*, August 1, 2015, accessed December 2, 2017, http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/2-dunya-kirim-tatar-kongresi-basladi/138753/; "Dünya qırımtatar kongresi II. toplantısı -netice beyannamesi- 1-2 ağustos 2015/Ankara," Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, August 2, 2015, accessed December 2, 2017, http://qtmm.org/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/4893-d%C3%BCnya-qirimtatar-kongresi-ii-toplantisi-netice-beyannamesi-1-2-a%C4%9Fustos-2015-ankara.

19 "Parlamento Başkanından Kurultay'ın 100. yılı için özel oturum duyurusu," *QHA*, December 4, 2017, accessed February 2, 2018, http://qha.com.ua/tr/siyaset/parlamento-baskanindan-kurultay-in-100-yili-icin-ozel-oturum-duyurusu/162616/; "Ukrayna Parlamentosu'nda Kurultayın 100. Yılı için özel oturum," December 6, 2017, QHA, accessed February 2, 2018, http://qha.com.ua/tr/photo/ukrayna-parlamentosu-nda-kurultayin-100-yili-icin-ozel-oturum/29751/#1.

gave a speech in the name of the Crimean Tatar diaspora. He underlined the readiness of the Crimean Tatars to work for providing peace and solidarity in Ukraine and Crimea. Additionally, he underlined the importance of an alliance with Turkey and Ukraine for the regional security and invited Ukrainian authorities to take necessary measures to improve their relations with Turkey, which hosts the largest diaspora population of Crimean Tatars.

Change in the relations between Ukraine and Crimean Tatar diaspora is observed in Turkey also. One of the most significant changes occurred in the intimacy between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar diasporas. On 8 April 2017, leaders of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar diaspora organizations came together in a meeting hosted by the Ambassador of Ukraine in Turkey, Andriy Sbiha, in the Embassy of Ukraine in Ankara. The topic of the meeting was increasing the cooperation between diasporas and introducing Ukraine in Turkey. At the end of the meeting, diaspora representatives signed a declaration, and a coordination group was established between Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian associations.[20] In the annual meeting of this group in 2018, Crimean Tatar flag was hung in the hall by the Ukrainian and Turkish flags, and three national anthems were sung as in the Ukrainian Parliament and reception of the 100th anniversary of the Kurultai.[21]

This transformation opened a new phase in which relations between the Crimean Tatar diaspora and Ukraine were redefined. Today, the Crimean Tatar diaspora has become aware that their relations with Ukraine are important in their acquisition of rights in the country; and more importantly, Crimean Tatar activists have come to realize that the promotion of Ukraine in Turkey and in the international arena is important if people are to understand the differences between Russia and Ukraine. They believe that through this discourse, Crimean Tatars will find the opportunity to voice their problems and to reveal the threatening situation they are in under occupation. The promises related to their indigenous rights and the official support they are receiving from the Ukrainian authorities enable them to keep their problems on the agenda of the international community.

Conclusion

Under these circumstances the estimated size of the Crimean Tatar diaspora, which is counted in millions, and the number of associations in Turkey became a very important factor for the relationship between Turkey and Ukraine. Furthermore, the convergence and the changing of the relations between Crimean Tatar diaspora and Ukraine is likely to influence the relations between Ukraine and Turkey.

The meeting of the World Congress of Crimean Tatars in Ankara in 2015, organized by the Crimean Tatar diaspora platform, was a significant example of

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20 "Ukrayna ve Kırım Tatar derneklerinin koordinasyon grubu kuruldu," *QHA*, April 9, 2017, accessed February 2, 2018, http://qha.com.ua/tr/toplum/ukrayna-ve-kirim-tatar-derneklerinin-koordinasyon-grubu-kuruldu/154462/.

21 "Ukrayna Dernekleri ikinci koordinasyon toplantısı Ankara'da yapıldı," *QHA*, January 21, 2019, accessed February 2, 2018, http://qha.com.ua/tr/toplum/ukrayna-dernekleri-ikinci-koordinasyon-toplantisi-ankara-da-yapildi/164798/.

the impact of the Crimean Tatars on the relations between Ukraine and Turkey. In this event, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, the ambassadors to Turkey of Romania, Lithuania, and the United States, representatives of the EU, and deputies from the MHP, CHP, and AKP, all declared their support for the Crimean Tatars and their disapproval of the Russian occupation of the Crimean Peninsula. Subsequent to the declarations from Turkey, Crimean Tatar institutions are inviting Turkey to join the international sanctions against the Russian Federation, and to increase its partnership with Ukraine. Mustafa Jemilev, who is a prominent human rights activist in Turkey and around the globe, expresses his gratitude for the Turkish authorities' constant support, including financial aid for housing problems of Crimean IDPs in Ukraine, diplomatic efforts for the political prisoners and the release of Ilmi Umerov and Ahtem Chiygoz, support for cultural projects in the diaspora, and constant support to the Crimean Tatar movement. However, he has spoken out against Turkey's reluctance to fully participate in the Western sanctions against the Russian Federation and is working to change Turkish public opinion as regards Turkey's foreign policy on this issue, and to force Turkey to put its support behind Ukraine.

Activists among the diaspora are organizing public demonstrations, publishing declarations, trying to increase their lobbying activities, seeking to improve their contacts with policy makers, experts and scholars in Turkey, and are trying to gain influence in decision-making processes. Most importantly, Crimean Tatar diaspora organizations are entering into new partnerships with Ukrainian NGOs and organizing joint projects with experts, scholars and activists in Ukraine and Turkey. They argue that a partnership between Turkey and Ukraine is crucial for regional security and the protection of their rights in their homeland. Last but not least, the diaspora activists are trying the abolish the stereotypes and fight against the Russian propaganda in Turkey. That is, they are trying to affect the public opinion in Turkey and to demonstrate the differences between Russia and Ukraine. It is a very important maneuver aiming to keep the Russian occupation in Crimea and aggression to Ukraine in the agenda of the Turkish politics.

Today, Ukraine and Turkey are concentrating their efforts to find alternative partnerships and to retain the balance of regional power relations. To this end, the two countries are seeking ways to increase cooperation, e.g. paying mutual presidential visits. The next key step in this process is to extend the cooperation at a social level, and to invite the peoples of the two countries to contribute to such efforts. Crimean Tatar associations are already playing their role in Turkey in the Turkish society. In the events and meetings organized in Turkey, the similarities of the Turkic and Ukrainian cultures are being underlined, and Ukrainian symbols are introduced. While explaining the reasons behind the political preferences of the Crimean Tatar National Movement, references are made to the reform period in Ukraine, acquisitions of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine, Russian oppressions in Crimea, the war in the Eastern Ukraine, and the Russian practices to annihilate the Crimean Tatar activism in their homeland.

To conclude, the true potential of the Crimean Tatar diaspora was fulfilled after 2014, and this new phase of activism has increased participation in regional politics. Promises made by the Ukrainian authorities, the gains achieved by the diaspora from Ukraine, and the increasing activism among the Crimean Tatar diaspora are providing stakeholders with new opportunities which would be all but unimaginable a couple of years ago. This signals the possibility of far stronger relations between Turkey and Ukraine. To sum up, good relations between Turkey and Crimean Tatars and the new character of the relationship between Ukraine and Crimean Tatars are creating new bridges of collaboration and a new platform for cooperation between Ukraine and Turkey.

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